

SENSATIONAL RELIGION,

IN

PAST TIMES AND THE PRESENT DAY.

BY

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LONDON:

ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

1890.

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P R E F A C E .

It has become the fashion in religious newspaper reports of evangelistic missions, to congratulate the Church upon the fact that so many scores or hundreds were converted, or entered the inquiry-room, as seekers of salvation, consecration, or entire sanctification, during the mission—and that all these, and other good results, were produced ‘without excitement,’ ‘without sensationalism,’ ‘on old lines,’ ‘on Methodist lines,’ ‘by ordinary services’—or by some similar expression, to denote the supreme contempt of the reporter for the rough and boisterous doings of other evangelists.

Another feature in modern Church life is to relegate all that sort of thing to the reeking and foetid atmosphere of the ‘Army barracks’—not because deemed unsuitable for the unkempt poor, but decidedly too ‘low’ for the suburban ‘tabernacle,’ whose æsthetic visitants would soon take themselves off if the *poor man’s religion* was introduced.*

* Several instances have come under my notice of late where the office of ‘chucker-out’ of Alleluia people has not been confined to the sombre verger of cathedral, minster, or parish church, but even Methodist and Dissenting officials have sent deputations to men and women of this class to get them to restrain their emotions, and in one or two cases I have heard of the law being put into force to effect this object.

The heroine of the following incident would, however, be a ‘poser’ for the Law Courts, and certainly deserves the palm for

How strange it is, however, that whilst there has been this spirit abroad in the churches, and whilst bishops, priests, parsons, and a host of other scribes, have been constantly heckling at the autocracy of General Booth, and decrying the methods and manners of his followers, whole communities of the poor, amongst all the nations, even from the very lowest regions of slumdom, have been attracted to the cross of Jesus Christ (a *real* cross, not a picture, or an ornament, or a profession).

The object of this little book is not to defend the Salvation Army, as the writer works in another sphere, and the leaders of that great organization are quite able to defend themselves; nor is it to deal with other subjects of greater importance than sensationalism, for successful spiritual work, such as personal holiness, prayer, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, etc. These have been already ably treated by many other writers.

But whilst not claiming to be either of a dialectic habit of mind, or exhaustive in his facts or arguments, the author has prepared this little treatise with the sincere hope, and prayer, that it may settle the mental difficulties of some students of the past of

courage and resource in the presence of Ecclesiastical Bumble-dom:

At one of the most fashionable churches in a large Midland town there worshipped an old woman who persisted in shouting 'Alleluia' when anything was said from the pulpit which woke an answering chord in her heart. One Sunday she was informed by some decorous official that a very profound and popular preacher was to take the evening service, and that a very stylish congregation was expected, and the emotional member was requested to keep silence, or they would be obliged to remove her. But the preacher pleased her, and out rang her 'Alleluia,' to the scandal of the formalists and dismay of the parson. Two officials accordingly came to remove her, and as they were helping her down the aisle she exclaimed: 'I am still better off than my dear Master; He had only *one* ass to carry Him, but I have *two*.'

Christianity, and incite them not only to accept the truths it strives to inculcate, but *stir them up* to active toil for God.

The fact is, if sensational religion means what is described in this book, it is not only a 'desideratum,' but a *sine quâ non* for *every* believer in Jesus Christ, and *every* Christian organization, if the poor, who are still falling at our side by tens of thousands, are to be saved, and the worldly, self-loving '*religionism*,' which now largely usurps the place of the Son of God, is to be overturned.

John Wesley, in his definition of what Christian perfection is *not*, says that it is *not absolute* perfection, nor *angelic* perfection, nor *Adamic* perfection.

This is an excellent, clear, concise definition, which is accepted as such by Methodist theologians throughout the world. A Methodist minister, however, at a holiness convention, at which I was present, some years ago, thought he would make an addition to this definition, so he announced that Christian perfection was not *emotional* perfection. The majority of those who were present evidently disapproved of this interpolation, and his words fell very flat upon the whole assemblage. Before he had finished his sermonette I felt like that good man in a Scotch Kirk, who sat and heard the dull, monotonous labyrinth of words which 'icicled' themselves from the lips of a very erudite but emotionless Doctor of Divinity, until he cried out: 'Eh, Doctor, ye are a cauld preacher!'

Now this good minister at the holiness convention was *professedly* trying to prevent his hearers from splitting their frail barks upon a rock which his own imagination had conjured up; for few there were in danger of getting *emotional* perfection—the great risk was that they would satiate themselves with *intellectual* perfection. But, in *reality*, he was attempting to depreciate the teaching and work of others, who, whilst as loyal as himself in proclaiming a full salva-

tion, not only from sin, but from wilful darkness, and blindness of all kinds, could also pray with Wesley, and his sensational poets, such prayers as these :

‘Jehovah, God the Spirit, shine,
Father and Son to show !
With *bliss ineffable, divine,*
Our *ravished hearts o'erflow.*’

Or this,

‘Spirit of Holiness,
Let all Thy *saints adore*
Thy *sacred energy*, and bless
Thine heart-renewing power.

‘Not angel-tongues can tell
Thy love's *ecstatic height*,
The glorious *joy unspeakable*,
The beatific sight.

‘Eternal Triune Lord !
Let *all the hosts above*,
Let *all the sons of men record*
And *dwell* upon Thy love.

‘When heaven and earth are fled
Before Thy glorious face,
Sing all the saints Thy love hath made
Thine everlasting praise !’

It is true that where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty, but the nearer the man of steel and ice can get to the *fire* of the Holy Ghost, the sooner will he melt into that unutterable tenderness of love which can rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

Oh for a blessed experience for all God's children, including yourself, dear reader, like that expressed in another old Methodist verse of prayer :

‘The righteousness that never ends,
But makes an *end of sin* ;
The *joy* that *human thought transcends*,
Into our souls bring in.’

SENSATIONAL RELIGION.

• ‘He who far off beholds another dancing,
Even he who dances best, and all the time
Hears not the music that he dances to,
Thinks him a madman, apprehending not
The law which moves his else eccentric motions,
So he that in himself insensible
Of love’s sweet influence misjudges him
Who moves according to love’s melody,
And knowing not that all these sighs and tears,
Ejaculations and impatiences,
Are necessary changes of a measure
Which the divine musician plays, may call
The lover crazy, which he would not do
Did he within his own heart hear the tune
Played by the great musician of the world.’
CALDERON, *translated by Fitzgerald.*

CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS SENSATIONALISM?

‘SHEN-SHA-SHUN! Shal-va-tion Army! Blue Ribbon
Army! Bands! Trumpets! Drums! Shen-sha-
shun! None of yer shen-sha-shun for me! I like a
comf’able seat in a church, I do! None of yer shen-
sha-shun for me!’

These were the exact words of an ardent disciple
of John Barleycorn who was staggering along within

hearing of a Salvation Army band, and indulging himself in a little open-air soliloquy.

'Ah! my poor fellow,' said I, as I took his arm, 'I'll tell you the sensation you like best. You like the sensation of smashing the pots and chairs and tables in your own miserable home—don't you, now?'

He came to a sudden dead stand, and, blinking mournfully at me with his bloodshot eyes, he said in true Yorkshire fashion:

'Awm afear'd tha'rt reight, lad.'

But his words set me thinking. I began to ask myself the question: If the churches and chapels are so very comfortable, why don't these fellows go there? And if they do go there, how is it they do not get changed and saved? Nay, may not the very sensationalism of these more modern methods be, after all, more Scriptural, more powerful, and more truly compassionate than anything one has seen the churches doing to get at the lost and fallen?

Reaching home, I looked up the subject, and first I began to ask, What is the meaning of the word *sensation*? I found a popular dictionary definition ran as follows: 'An impression made upon the mind through the medium of the senses, or that on which perception or consciousness is consequent; feeling awakened by external objects, or by some change in the condition of the body; feeling awakened by immaterial objects—the passions, etc.; a state of excited interest or feeling in an assembly or the public mind.'*

* Chambers's Dictionary.

'Now,' thought I, 'if all this is really true, how else are the poor going to be reached?—nay, indeed, how else have they ever been reached? You cannot reach them through their intellects, for among the adult population the effects of modern educational reform have had no chance of development, and far too many have brains so besodden with drink as scarcely even to be able to understand twenty consecutive sentences.'

• 'It is true there is the devil's sensationalism, for he has always been wise in his day in getting at the best methods for damning human souls. There are the bad books, the impure plays, the ghastly horrors of all our great cities appealing perpetually and successfully to men's passions.

It is usual, also, to speak of this as a sensational age, and to put it in unfavourable contrast with the more jog-trot and sedate past. How strange, however, is that other equally trite fact that this very age has been the one in which more progress has been made in civilization, science, discovery, and philanthropy than in all the long centuries preceding it!

How strange that, in spite of all the sensationalism, the average duration of human life has been lengthened, the hours of labour shortened, the tastes of the rich refined, the condition of the poor improved, the miseries of the prison and the madhouse minimized, the fetters of the slave snapped, and the universal reign of Love brought wondrously nearer to all mankind!

Nay, not only has all this happened in this sensational age, but if the dictionary definition be a true

one, and 'sensation is feeling awakened by impressions made upon the mind through the medium of the senses,' then may we not trace much of this wonderful progress to the very sensationalism so much decried?

The riots of the Chartists, the great Anti-Corn Law and Reform demonstrations were sensational; but they hurried on the era of a free press, cheap bread, and political freedom. The rebellion of the Luddites, which was evoked by the introduction of machinery, was sensational, but only tended to clear the air of false alarms as to the real utility of those inventions, and to show up the true nature of selfish Conservatism.

It was sensational when Mr. Plimsoll stamped his foot on the floor of the House of Commons, and shook his fist in the face of the Prime Minister; but his very earnestness carried the measure for protecting 'Poor Jack' against the selfishness and cruelty of the great shipowners.

Nay, indeed, how often would the character, demeanour, and speeches of Mr. Gladstone have been dubbed as sensational by his enemies! His life has always been in earnest, always intense, always aggressive against wrong and injustice. Hence his attitudes and his manner of life have been so often caricatured by the comic journals as full of vivacity—his eyes flashing fire, his face leonine, his arms sawing the air, his whole physique spurred on by the excitement of his theme. What greater piece of sensationalism than his tour through Midlothian? Yet it changed the policy and projects of a great empire, and inaugu-

rated a new era for all departments of the public service.

Indeed, all great orators have been more or less sensational. A deluge of wordy periods, a mere cold appeal to the intellect, a metaphysical disquisition upon the theories of human philosophy—these methods seldom reach great masses of men, or lead the crowd to do or dare great things. But when the orator forgets his notes, his orderly arrangement of thoughts, and his rounded and polished periods, and speaks only what he feels straight from his heart, then his own fire electrifies his audience and brings them up to action.

Nay, indeed, it may not be words at all, but mere gestures, like those of Father Gavazzi to the soldiers of Garibaldi, which wrought them up to such a pitch of enthusiasm that they were ready for anything.

CHAPTER II.

THE SENSATIONALISM OF REVELATION.

BUT, I reasoned, if orators, statesmen, and great reformers have so successfully adopted sensational methods, and the prince of evil also, what Scriptural evidences have we that even the Great God Himself has not condescended to speak to man through His prophets, Apostles, and others, by the same means ?

An old man building a huge sailing vessel in the middle of the dry land, and entering into it with his family, and the families of beasts, and fowl, and creeping things, whilst the every-day world wagged on, and called him 'fool'—that was sensational, but was it not God's way of warning the corrupt and violent antediluvians ? 'Thus did Noah ; according to all that God commanded him, so did he.'

The ten plagues of Egypt ; the dividing of the waters of the Red Sea ; the pillar of a cloud by day, and of fire by night ; the thunders and lightnings of Mount Sinai, the mount altogether in a smoke ; the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud and long, and waxing louder and louder ; Moses speaking, and the living God answering him by a voice—all this was sensational, but the startling record thrills

human hearts still, and stamps the law of the Pentateuch with the signet of Divine warrant. 'The tables of Sinai were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God graven upon the tables' (Exodus xxxii. 16).

Dear reader, that you may not think that rebellious Israel alone was intended to be impressed by these matchless exhibitions of the power of God, and His eternal desire that *all* men should know Him from the least unto the greatest, turn with me to Numbers xiii. and xiv. The spies, we read, who went to search the promised land terrified Israel with their false rumours, and the people murmured at the news, and spent a night in discordant and rebellious weeping, which developed into open mutiny against their leaders and their God; then read on of that tender and importunate appeal of Moses to the Great I Am, when His anger was provoked, and the vials of His wrath prepared. Oh! how wonderful that this great pleader should elicit the reply: 'I have pardoned according to thy word.' But the Divine Father did not intend that the messages of Sinai and the visible tokens of His presence should cease, so He adds: 'But as truly as I live, *all* the earth shall be *filled* with the *glory* of the Lord.'

The warnings of the burning mount, sensational though they might be, must be followed by methods, punishments, and marvels still more so. Earth-
quakes, plagues, famine, drought, punishment for the rebellious, followed side by side with equally sensational marvels of mercy, such as the brazen serpent, the smitten rock, Jordan divided, the sun and moon

standing still, Samson's marvels of physical strength, and many other equally striking manifestations of Divine love both under Moses, Joshua, and the Judges.

Then came the prophets. We read of Isaiah, whose very name (Salvation of Jehovah) denotes the Divine authenticity of his message, being commanded to walk naked and barefooted three years for a 'sign and wonder upon Egypt and Ethiopia' to prefigure their shameful captivity;

Of Jeremiah, a prophet at fourteen years of age (how sensational!), standing in the gate of the Lord's house, weeping till his eyes not only *filled* but *failed* with tears, nearly one hundred times using the ejaculation 'Oh!' in his prophetic writings; exciting the opposition, treachery, and persecution of his own household, and the men of his own city by his sensational types, and his burning words;

Of Ezekiel, with his awe-inspiring visions, his mouth opened and shut by superhuman hands; under the types of a siege (chap. iv. 1-9), a shaving and dividing of the hair of his head (chap. v. 1-5), a chain (chap. vii. 23), the removing of his household goods in the presence of the people (chap. xii. 1-7), and by various other equally striking methods was he commanded to warn his countrymen of their impending fate;

Of Daniel and the three Hebrew children, with their witnessing to the unbelieving heathen from the lions' den, and the burning fiery furnace, or pointing conscience-stricken Belshazzar to the mystic finger writing his death-warrant on the wall of his palace;

Of Jonah *crying* (how sensational!) through the *streets* (what would the police say?) of Nineveh: 'Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown;'

Of Joel, who whilst he calls on the drunkards to *awake* and weep, and all the drinkers of wine to howl (we could do with Joel in a few respectable chapels and churches now—I counted sixty-three people asleep not long ago in a Methodist Chapel), foretells the impending visitation of locusts and drought, as a figurative picture of threatened invasions;

Of Amos, who was no prophet, neither the son of a prophet, but a herdsman and gatherer of sycamore fruit, until God called him to prophesy. He also was commanded by the type of a plumbline and a basket of summer fruit to show the nearness of Israel's disgrace.

Then the opening of the New Testament dispensation was announced by a voice *crying* in the *wilderness*, and he who spoke was only girdled with camel's hair and fed on the meanest fare—just the very reason why the poor came out to hear him. He was sensational.

And so was everything that Jesus both did and said. Whilst He spake as never man spake, the *acts* of His whole life were also one continued protest against the '*ruts*' of Pharisaism and tradition. Who had ever heard of a boy of twelve disputing with the doctors in the Temple? That was sensational.

At His baptism, His transfiguration, His crucifixion, His resurrection, and His ascension, events occurred so supernatural and sensational as had never

been witnessed before. His marvellous miracles, His triumphant processional entry into Jerusalem, His enormous congregations, sometimes fed by His own hands—all these things were sensational. And His methods were to be used afterwards, and even more sensational ones still.

‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also ; and *greater works* than these shall he do, because I go unto My Father.’ So the twelve disciples had power given to them against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases. And the seventy were chosen for the same purpose, for they returned with joy, saying, ‘Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy name.’

And what, we repeat, could be more sensational than the exercise of gifts such as these ? which, be it remembered, to the everlasting shame of unbelievers now, were to be the inheritance of *him that believeth* (which means *every* believer, past, present, and future), not alone the disciples.

But *preaching* itself, by the early pioneers of Christianity, was just as sensational for that day as the trumpets, drums, and banners of the present. Mars Hill at Athens had never re-echoed with manly strains like those Paul raised against the Grecian gods ; and all Jerusalem was in an uproar when he boldly gave them his experience or the account of his conversion—a method of getting at the human heart always far more telling than any other. Oh for more witnessing from the pulpit, and less essay-reciting !

Then there is the *fulness of joy* about which none but true Christians can really understand anything, and which, if we are to believe the Bible and the history of the Christian Church, has always found for itself at times a sensational method of expressing itself, shocking, indeed, to the rich Laodicean, the Pharisaic professional, and the hired clerk, but often the only medium of quickening the sorrowful, despairing, and down-trodden poor.

• Travelling in the railway-carriage some time ago with a respectably-dressed working man, I noticed he was reading *Tit-Bits*. Turning to him, I said kindly:

‘Don’t you think, my friend, by far the largest majority of people live on “bits”? — “Tit-Bits,” “Rare-Bits,” “Choice-Bits,” “Illustrated Bits”—all sorts of *bits*, no *bulk* of anything. How many seem to be always *sip, sip*, sipping, without ever testing the depth or volume of anything; always *chirp, chirp*, chirping, without ever knowing the pleasures of a real joyous song!’

Without replying, my companion suddenly looked up to the hat-rail above him, on which was a bird-cage, and called ‘Tom! Tom!’ In an instant there was a smart reply from a splendid mule canary, who, although hid from the light by a pocket-handkerchief, followed on with such a burst of song as I never heard before. ‘Ah, sir,’ said my friend whilst the bird was in the midst of his raptures, ‘that bird knows something about *fulness of joy*, for he often sings until he drops down into the bottom of the cage with sheer exhaustion.’

We separated at the next station, or we should

have had more conversation on so delightful a theme. But as the train rattled along, my thoughts were directed to the songs of the 'Halleluiah King.'

Ah! there was no other degree of spiritual exhilaration except *fulness* that would satisfy him. In season and out of season, by day and by night, in private and public, he praised with his whole heart.

'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and *all* that is within me, bless His holy name.'

'My soul shall be *joyful* in the Lord; it shall *rejoice* in His salvation.'

'The Lord will command His loving kindness in the *daytime*, and in the *night* His *song* shall be with me.'

'In God we boast all the *day long*, and praise Thy name *for ever*.'

'*Evening* and *morning* and at *noon* will I pray and *cry aloud*, and He shall hear my voice.'

'My heart is fixed' (or prepared; yes, that was the reason why he could sing and give praise), 'my heart is fixed: I will *sing* and give *praise*.'

'*Awake up*, my glory, *awake psaltery and harp*; I myself will *awake early*.'

'I will *praise* Thee, O Lord, among the people; I will *sing* unto Thee among the *nations*.'

'So will I *sing praise* unto Thy name *for ever*, that I may *daily* perform my vows.'

And David was not only full of Alleluia himself, but he summoned all creation, animate and inanimate, celestial and terrestrial, the elements, the weather, and even the very atmosphere itself—all to his assistance. Psalm cxlviii.

And how enthusiastically he invokes the praises of God's saints, not only to be offered in the congregation of the people and the assembly of the elders (Psalm cvii. 31, 32), but they are to sing aloud upon their beds* (Psalm cxlix. 5), for it was what he did himself.

'At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee because of Thy righteous judgments' (Psalm cxix. 62).

• A dear good Methodist friend of mine went to a church some little time ago, to hear a relative of his preach, and, as he warmly observed to me, the preacher was 'on the blood.'

As the oft-told story of the glorious atonement of Jesus filled his ears, it warmed his heart, too, and forgetting where he was he shouted 'Alleluiah !'

'You mustn't do that here,' gruffly intimated a churchwarden, who, not having much to praise the Lord for himself, thought it necessary to drag everybody else down to his own dead level.

I am afraid Mr. Churchwarden would have had a bad time of it if he had slept in the next apartment to Israel's Royal Salvationist. And what, indeed, would he have done had he worshipped in the Temple at Jerusalem, of which David says: 'And in His Temple *everything* saith "Glory"?' (Psalm xxx. 9, New Version). No praiseless, Godless, soulless worship there. Everything had a voice there, and the king led on. Glorious precentor, indeed !

And probably this good brother would hear com-

* If Elihu spoke the truth in his appeal to Job, then songs in the night are *given* by God Himself. See Job xxxv. 10.

placently the perfunctory response of the professional clerk, or paid choir, in his own church, forgetting that whilst the great choirmaster himself praised with his whole *heart*—not his *throat*, nor his *head*—he calls not only on Levites and singers, but *kings, princes, judges, young men and maidens, old men* and even *children*, to join in his eternal pæan.

I was once walking along the street of a city, and met the leading tenor of the cathedral choir. Grasping him by the hand—as I knew him slightly—I said* with all the earnestness and tenderness that I could command: ‘Do you sing for Jesus Christ, my brother, or for money, which?’ Without appearing in the least offended, he replied almost mournfully: ‘I am afraid for money!’ Ah! what a sad sight is that of nearly all our great cathedrals, where thousands of pounds and hundreds of hours are wasted in harmonious, but utterly useless chanting, often to bare walls on the week-day, or to cultivated and exacting, but indolent and luxurious audiences, assisted occasionally by *opera singers* on Sundays.*

* A very amusing comment upon the extreme latitude which has often been granted in Mother Church towards the vagaries of the professional and fashionable—whilst she has promptly silenced the humble ecstasies of the poor and despised—is afforded in the following letter, which I have lately stumbled across in an old number of the *Spectator* (October 25, 1739). Had the lady mentioned here been a poor man shouting ‘Amen!’ he would not have been honoured by the parson’s airing his grievance in the fashionable journal of the day, but in all probability would have speedily found himself cooling his ardour in the nearest horsepond, or regaling himself on ‘skilly’ in the nearest gaol.

‘MR. SPECTATOR,

‘I am a country clergyman, and hope you will lend me your assistance in ridiculing some little indecencies which cannot so properly be exposed from the pulpit.

And if, gentle reader, you demur to this statement, let me beg of you to find me a life that has been transformed, or a home that has been changed by any mere listening to cathedral music. That there might have been such a case I would not deny, but I must say I have never read or heard of one. Prayer is communion, talking to God. When we talk to God, He talks with us. When we ask anything according to His will, it is as certain to be granted as faith is exercised. If, then, we ask for bread to feed the children, will the Great Father give us a stone? Oh no, no! What is God-given, whether it be a little

'A widow lady, who straggled this summer from London into my parish for the benefit of the air, as she says, appears every Sunday at church with many fashionable extravagancies, to the great astonishment of my congregation.

'But what gives us the most offence is her theatrical manner of singing the Psalms. She introduces above *fifty Italian airs* into the hundredth psalm, and whilst we begin "*All people*" in the old solemn tune of our forefathers, she in a quite different key runs division on the vowels, and adorns them with the graces of Nicolini; if she meets with "Eke" or "Aye," which are frequent in the metre of Hopkins and Sternhold, we are certain to hear her quavering them half a minute after us to some sprightly airs of the opera.

'I am very far from being an enemy to church music; but fear this abuse of it may make my parish ridiculous, who already look on the singing Psalms as an entertainment, and not part of their devotion. Besides, I am apprehensive that the infection may spread, for Squire Squeekum, who by his voice seems (if I may use the expression) to be cut out for an Italian singer, was last Sunday practising the same airs.

'I know the lady's principles, and that she will plead the toleration which (as she fancies) allows her nonconformity in this particular; but I beg you to acquaint her that singing the Psalms in a different tune from the rest of the congregation is a sort of schism not tolerated by that Act.

'I am, sir,

'Your very humble servant,

'R. S.'

song, a short testimony, or an earnest evangelical address, *must* go home somewhere.

What a thrill of emotion has rushed through the hearts of scores of his pot companions, when Jack, once wife-beater, child-starver, home-destroyer, has got up to sing out of his fulness of joy a song of deliverance from the devil's chains! His voice might be husky, his knowledge of harmony scant, his poetry doggerel, but it was his *experience* in song. And every sound was *sensational*, for he was himself a living miracle.

The talents of a Sims Reeves or a Santley create admiration, and it may be enthusiasm, but who ever heard of a professional singer, paid for his work, with no message from on High, no spiritual inspiration, no witnessing life behind it—who ever heard of a professional singer producing in the listener anything beyond a fillip to a cultured taste, or an emotional ripple of pleasure to a refined ear, both as evanescent as an insect's hum?

But the song of the converted drunkard brings not only fulness of joy to his own soul, but has in thousands of instances, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, brought conviction and repentance to the heart of the sinner.

Nor are the refined, cultured, trained methods of publicly expressing their spiritual exhilaration the only Scriptural methods.

There are very few records in Old Testament history of any great epoch or revival amongst God's ancient Church, when the people did *not use every form of outwardly expressing what they felt*. After their

deliverance from Egypt there was the song of Moses and the children of Israel, and the timbrels of Miriam the prophetess, and her women. And when the first sin offering for himself and the burnt offering for the people were offered by Aaron, 'and Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out and blessed the people, the *glory* of the Lord appeared unto all the people. And there came *fire* out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat ; which when all the people saw they *shouted, and fell on their faces*' (Lev. ix.). How sensational !

And this shouting of the multitude *was* a mighty thing, for when the walls of Jericho fell flat it was because the people 'shouted with a great shout with the priests carrying seven rams' horns and the ark of the Lord marching on before.' How sensational !

At Carmel, also, when Elijah had stood between their unbelief and the infinite power of the living God, and by his faith and prayer baffled Baal's priests, as the fire of the Lord descended and consumed his sacrifice, the people were again on their faces crying, 'The Lord, He is the God ; the Lord, He is the God.'

In that great revival of religion also under Hezekiah, 'all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded . . . the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped.' 'Hezekiah rejoiced, and all the people with him.' How sensational !

Similar scenes were enacted in the time of Ezra. True, many of the old men who had seen the first

house wept when the foundation of the new *Salvation Army Barracks* was laid before them. It was not ornate enough for them. But the shout of joy was a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.

Nay, indeed, one cannot but wonder that a religion which can make men *cry aloud and shout* should ever be denounced when the ancient people of God not only indulged in such ecstasies, but were incited to do it, not only by the prophets, but by the Lord Jehovah Himself.

‘O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph’ (Psa. xlvii. 1).

‘For thus saith the Lord, Sing with gladness for Jacob, and *shout* among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save Thy people, the remnant of Israel’ (Jer. xxxi. 7).

‘Shout, O Israel; be glad with all the heart’ (Zeph. iii. 14).

‘Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem’ (Zech. ix. 9).

‘Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion’ (Isa. xii. 6).

‘Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubabel thou shalt become a plain, and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it’ (Zeph. iv. 7).

Nor do we anywhere read of Him who wept with them that wept, and rejoiced with them that rejoiced, and yearned over the sheep who had no shepherd with a great yearning, checking the enthusiasm of the great multitudes who heard Him gladly, and followed Him even into the wilderness. It is true that those

striking prototypes of modern priestism and perfunctory professionalism, the chief priest and scribes, were sore displeased with His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, and the very sensational reception given to Him, not only by the great multitude who spread their garments before Him, cutting down palm branches from the trees, and strawing them in His way, but by actually shouting 'Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.' And when the little children joined in the glad chorus, they said unto Him, 'Hearest Thou what these say?' Then they got His magnificent answer, which ought for ever to have silenced not only them, but every caviller against emotional religion: 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise.'

And when, again, these murmurers objected to His receiving sinners, and eating with them, He sketched before them the touching parable of the lost sheep, which He wound up by drawing aside the curtain which had in all previous ages hid humanity from the sight of the angelic world, and He makes us listen to the Alleluias of heaven when He says 'that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance.' The Apostle John, still further thrusting aside these mysterious curtains, whilst awing our souls with the silence which was in heaven about the space of half an hour, introduces us also into the presence of the Lamb, standing upon Mount Zion: 'And with Him an hundred forty and four thousand,

having His Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps ; and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts and the elders ; and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.' Glory be to God ! when we get amongst the redeemed ones upon Mount Zion, we shall no longer be muzzled by churchwardens, but having all tears wiped away, and there being no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither any more pain, we shall join with that great 'Alleluia ; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth,' which shall be as the *voice* of a *great multitude*, and as the *voice of many waters*, and as the voice of *mighty* thunderings. How sensational ! Our responses in that blessed world will not be led off by a hired clerk, or an unsaved choir, but by those blessed angels who stand round about the throne, and who fall before the throne on their faces and worship God, saying : 'Amen ; blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.'

'O what a blessed hope is ours,
While here on earth we stay !
We more than taste the heavenly powers,
And antedate that day :
We feel the resurrection near,
Our life in Christ concealed ;
And with His glorious presence here
Our earthen vessels filled.

THE SENSATIONALISM OF REVELATION. 21

'O would He more of heaven bestow
And let the vessel break,
And let our ransomed spirits go
To grasp the God we seek !
In rapturous awe on Him to gaze
Who bought the sight for me ;
And *shout* and wonder at His grace
Through all eternity.'

CHAPTER III.

THE SENSATIONALISM OF EARLY CHRISTIANITY.

DEAR reader, the theme is exhilarating. Whatever its effect upon you, this little detour from the tracing of the historical revelation of a spiritually sensational religion into the presence-chamber of those who have come out of great tribulation, and who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, has done me good. Need I, however, remind you that after the blessed Lord had departed in body from this earth and the day of Pentecost had fully come, not only were the signs of the presence of the Holy Ghost amongst the disciples—the rushing mighty wind and the cloven tongues like as of fire—but they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

This blessed baptism from above was then, as it has ever been since, qualification enough for the Apostles to make them the means of drawing together huge concourses of people. And for the common people to hear strangers preaching to them in their own language was sensational enough. Then their miracles, their spotless lives, and their martyr deaths were

striking enough to keep the eyes of the world fixed on the sect of the despised Nazarene all through the early days of the Church.

But even during the first three centuries we read of all nights of prayer, mingled with singing ; of meetings held in the open air, one of which was almost broken up by the Emperor Valens ; but the resolution of a woman so staggered his mind that it caused him to cease his attempt.

- And in the time of the Emperor Julian the Apostate we cannot forget that blessed Salvation Army captain, Publia, a widow of great reputation, who, with a number of virgins, over whom she presided at Antioch, sang and praised God when Julian was passing by. She had selected such portions of the Psalms as expose the wickedness and folly of idolatry. Julian ordered them to hold their peace till he had passed them. Publia not complying with this request, he ordered her to be brought before him, and to be buffeted on each side of her face. This scene would be memorable indeed to all who witnessed it, and ought to be an eternal answer to those who fix woman's sphere within the four walls of her own home.

In the time of John Chrysostom hymns and litanies were composed, which drew many to the house of God who never attended, but spent their whole time in the theatre, and blessed results of salvation were achieved amongst these.

The melody of the early Christian Church, simple and somewhat monotonous as no doubt it was, was still a power often overlooked and forgotten by more

modern Christian hymnodists. St. Augustine, whilst slightly severe upon himself for some supposed or actual misuse of sacred song, still bears testimony to its power in his conversion and its assistance in his devotions. 'The pleasures of the ear have deeper hold on me. I find, while I am charmed with sacred melody, I am led astray at times by the luxury of *sensations*, and offend, not knowing at the time, but afterwards I discover it. Sometimes guarding against this fallacy, I err in the other extreme, and could wish all the melody of David's Psalms were removed from my ears and those of the Church, and think it safer to imitate the plan of Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, who directed a method of repeating the Psalms more resembling pronunciation than music. But *when I remember my tears of affection at my conversion* under the melody of the Church, with which I am still affected, *I again acknowledge the utility of the custom.*'

Then there is that remarkable account in the fifth century of the Emperor Theodosius, who, although a feeble prince, holding the affairs of government with a somewhat negligent hand, yet being greatly benefited by the vigorous wisdom of his sister, Pulcheria, who not only helped him in matters of state, but *who accustomed her brother to pray frequently, to honour the ministers, and to complete the destruction of idolatrous temples and worship.* This noble family, consisting of the young Emperor, his sister Pulcheria, and two younger sisters, rose early to sing the praises of God.

Although almost forced by the custom of the ages

to permit the shows of the circus, he visited them with reluctance. In the midst of one of the performances there was once a dreadful tempest, in consequence of which the Emperor ordered the criers to warn the people that it would be much better to leave the shows and betake themselves to prayer. The motion was accepted; the *Emperor sang hymns* as an example to the rest, and the whole assembly gave themselves up to devotion.

• With such a noble example who would not be glad to *sing a solo* for the Lord, even in a circus, before the world, or in the very face of hell?

It is, however, evident that during the sixth century the singing began to be the monopoly of the clergy, for we find that Cæsarius, Bishop of Arles, upon one occasion found that during one of his services, whilst the clergy were singing, the laity were talking. This he at once altered by heartily inducing his lay-hearers to join, and in a sermon still extant he exhorts them to sing with their *hearts* as well as their *voices*.

But this good bishop was one of the last heads of the Church who really manifested any public desire to let the people have any worship except that which the priest permitted, and then, all through the dark ages, a profligate, covetous, cruel, and detestable hierarchy chained the Bible, perverted its truths, set up idolatry, and pushed good men and women into a corner by their bloody tortures, and hideous burnings, and wholesale slaughters.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SENSATIONALISM OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

IT is, however, remarkable that wherever these persecuted adherents of the old faith immured themselves, there were to be heard the old songs of Zion, and the full worship of a saved and purified Church. No burnings, nor confiscation, nor social ostracism could annihilate the happy and triumphant praises of the Waldensian and Albigensian villagers, and their mountains and valleys reverberated with their heart and soul and voice music, although often it betrayed them to their bloodthirsty enemies. Nor should we forget the astonishing sensationalism of the preaching of those prophets of the Middle Ages—Tauler, Gerard, Jerome Savonarola, Jerome Narni, Capestran, Connecte, and others who were roused to action by their efforts—nor the equally sensational results.

When Connecte preached the ladies lowered their head-dresses, and committed quilled caps by hundreds to the flames. (What Salvationist has not witnessed similar giving up of similar idols, such as feathers, flowers, pipes, tobacco, etc.?) And when Narni thundered out his message from the pulpits of Rome,

the streets reverberated with the cries of the populace as they left the church, scourging themselves with ropes and crying, 'Lord have mercy upon us! Christ have mercy upon us!'

And when Savonarola took as his theme the mystical visions of the Apocalypse, which he applied with terrible directness to the frightful evils of that immoral age, he drew upon himself the bitter hatred of the clerics; but Divine inspiration was attributed to him by the people. Under the impulse of the popular enthusiasm which the earnestness of the prophet engendered, women flocked in troops to the public squares to fling down their costliest ornaments, and gay gallants and grave scholars publicly consigned to the flames before the gates of the cathedral filthy and licentious literature in armfuls.*

But it was not until the dawn of the Reformation that there was any general revival of a religion for the people.

Without entering here into a repetition of a story so often told, I may call my reader's attention to two facts—first, the superhuman courage of Luther and its results; second, his love of the people.

1. Although in the midst of universal spiritual

* It is a very grave comment upon the tolerating spirit which is in modern days shown by some persons of refinement and professed religion towards what is called 'realistic' writing, that even Boccaccio, the author of the 'Decamerone,' a filthy production (which one of our English magistrates has lately refused to pronounce as such), towards the end of his life was led to repentance for the crime of defiling the national conscience, and did his utmost to withdraw the books from circulation. These books were amongst the number of those condemned to the flames by Savonarola.

darkness, and by no means aided by the martial spirit of his clerical coadjutors, for they were most of them cold, calculating, and cautious, yet Luther, with his life in his hand and his reputation in God's, dared to declare, when asked to defend his cause with moderation: '*Too much folly is displeasing to men, but too much discretion is displeasing to God.* The Gospel cannot be defended without tumult and without scandal. The word of God is a sword, a war, a ruin, a stumbling-block, a destruction, a poison, and, as Amos says, it meets us like a bear in the road or a lioness in the forest. I seek nothing, I ask nothing. There is One greater than I who seeketh and asketh. If He should fall, I lose nothing; if He stand, I am profited nothing.*' *Sensational sentiments indeed!*

It is noteworthy that this noble spirit was communicated in no small degree to his lay-followers, for we find that when all the grandees of Germany, with their brilliant trains, were assembled at Spires, the Elector John with his 700 retainers was not least conspicuous. And what would modern cavillers at the wearing of uniform have said if they had seen these noble Salvation Army soldiers, each having embroidered on his right sleeve the letters 'V.D.M.I.Æ.'? — 'Verbum domini manet in æternum' ('The word of the Lord endureth for ever'). And not only so, but these letters, suggesting the great principle on which the

* See R. V., Malachi iv. 2. Old Version reads, 'But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth and *grow up* as calves of the stall.' But R. V. reads, 'But unto you that fear My name . . . and ye shall go forth and *gambol* as calves of the stall.' What an invocation to *sensational* indiscretion!

Reformers acted, were adopted in a similar way by the other evangelical princes—nay, by a method even still more *sensational*, for they were seen waving on banners or flashing from shields in every direction.

2. But whilst it was necessary for that age that the cause of the new gospel should be taken up with enthusiasm and courage by the rich and learned, yet Luther had taken good care to prove his love and regard for the opinion of the poor by nailing his theses to the door of the church at Wittemberg—one of the most sensational pieces of rebellion against the corruption of Rome that had ever been perpetrated. But by this means he took the common people into his confidence, and evoked their enthusiastic support.

And in the midst of his public anxieties and controversies he found time, as his cause became more completely organized, to compose music and write hymns, which rendered the worship of his churches more attractive, because the people had a voice, and the priest became a minister.

The seventeenth century was not distinguished for revivals of religion, but rather stood out in history as the battle-ground period for religious freedom. But how much modern evangelical Christianity owes to the noble and self-abnegating sensationalism of the early Quakers the modern disciples of George Fox would probably but tardily admit, for they are but a weak representation of his creed or his life.

Carlyle, however, assigns to the incident of his wearing a suit of leather as he preached Christ, at the risk of life and liberty, to the dissolute crowds of his countrymen, a place in history 'more remarkable

than the Diet of Worms, still more than the battles of Austerlitz, Waterloo, Peterloo, or any other battle—but an incident passed carelessly over by most historians, and treated with some degree of ridicule by others.'

But the claim of some to enrol the name of Fox amongst the sons of the prophets is more than established in that other fact of his life, that he walked through the streets of Lichfield *barefoot*, denouncing woe against it like Isaiah of old.

Need it be added that the singular garb, the weird methods, the bold public interruptions of ungodly ministers, were all distinguishing features of early Quakerism? which, having been initiated by their founder, were adopted by his disciples, who thus (albeit it might have been unwittingly) succeeded in drawing equally great crowds to hear their preaching, and at the same time often consigned themselves to the slow murder of their persecutors' prisons, whips, and cruel privations.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SENSATIONALISM OF THE METHODIST REVIVAL.

BUT it was not till those great prophets of early Methodism were raised up to quicken the spiritual life of the English Church and preach deliverance to the captive, the opening of the prison doors to them that were bound—it was not till then that the appearance of a spiritually sensational religion spread like lightning through the world. I may quote here a very memorable critique of Dr. Johnson's, who was one of the very best mouthpieces of the spirit of the cultured classes of his age, although, on the whole, he was not unfavourable to Methodism. I quote them as so singularly resembling modern criticisms of all revivals of religion :

‘Whitefield never drew as much attention as a mountebank does ; he did not draw attention by doing better than others, but by doing what was *strange*.

‘Were Astley to preach a sermon standing upon his head on horseback, he would collect a multitude to hear him ; but no man would say he made a better sermon for that.

‘I never treated Whitefield's ministry with contempt.

I believe he did good. He had devoted himself to the lower classes of mankind, and among them he was of use. But when *familiarity* and *noise* claim the praise due to knowledge, art, and eloquence, we must beat down such pretensions.'

And yet Whitefield's eccentricities, so much decried by the learned doctor, were *only those of all the other apostles of Methodism, such as field and street preaching*, and earnest, personal appeals to accept a present and full salvation.

There is no doubt the open-air preaching was a method of reaching the poor, which was at the direct instigation of the Holy Spirit, because of its very *sensationalism*. Mr. Wesley, refined, learned, cleric as he was by birth and education, would have much preferred the diminished strain on voice and nerve of the church or chapel, but this was not to be. One by one the doors were closed against him, until there was often nothing else left for him but the 'canopy of blue' and the 'verdant floor.' And hear his quaint remarks on the results upon one occasion :

'On Monday and Tuesday evening I preached abroad, near the Keelmen's Hospital, to *twice the people* we should have had at the *house*. What marvel the devil does not love field-preaching? Neither do I. I love a commodious room, a soft cushion, a handsome pulpit. But where is my zeal, if I do not trample all these under foot in order to *save one more soul* ?'

Would to God that the D.D.'s and M.A.'s, and professional orators of modern Methodism would take these words to heart and adopt them as their own !

At these mighty open-air services, as well as those held within walls, in the midst of hideous persecutions, often instigated and led on by clergymen, magistrates and other dignitaries, the power of God was made manifest in the conversion of tens of thousands of all classes, and physical manifestations occurred, which were attributed to *Satanic possession* and *madness*. Some cried aloud, others fell down as dead, remaining in that condition for hours together.

In one case (*Journal*, vol. ii., September, 1740) a woman in Northampton was so deeply wrought upon by conviction for sin that her husband sent her to Bedlam. She managed to effect her escape, but was retaken, chained down, and treated in the usual manner of those days, as brutally as could be conceived.

And strange to say, on many occasions those who sneered most at the work which was being wrought in their midst, were either struck down themselves or were led to acknowledge that the hand of God was in it. The following instances are very striking illustrations of what I have asserted :

Journal, vol. i., July 30, 1739: 'Two more were in strong pain, both their souls and bodies being well-nigh torn asunder. But though we cried unto God, there was no answer; neither did He as yet deliver them at all. One of these had been remarkably zealous against those that cried out, and made a noise; being sure that any of them might help it if they would. And the same opinion she was in still, till the moment she was struck through, as with a sword, and fell trembling to the ground. She then

cried aloud, though not articulately, her words being swallowed up. In this pain she continued twelve or fourteen hours, and then her soul was set at liberty. But her master (for she was a servant till that time at a gentleman's in town) forbid her returning to him, saying he would have none in his house who had received the Holy Ghost.'

Vol. i., April 29, 1739. — 'We understood that many were offended at the cries of those on whom the power of God came: among whom was a physician, who was much afraid there might be fraud or imposture in the case. To-day, one whom he had known many years was the first (while I was preaching in Newgate) who broke out "into strong cries and tears." He could hardly believe his own eyes and ears. He went and stood close to her, and observed every symptom, till great drops of sweat ran down her face, and all her bones shook. He then knew not what to think, being clearly convinced it was not fraud, nor yet any natural disorder. But when both her soul and body were healed in a moment, he acknowledged the finger of God.'

Vol. i., December, 1739. — 'I was violently attacked by some who were exceeding angry at those who cried out so; "being sure," they said, "it was all a cheat, and that anyone might help crying out if he would." I. Bl. was one of those who were sure of this. About eight the next morning, while he was alone in his chamber at private prayer, so horrible a dread overwhelmed him that he began crying out with all his might. All the family was alarmed. Several of them came running up into his chamber;

but he cried out so much the more till his breath was utterly spent. God then rebuked the adversary; and he is now less *wise in his own conceit*.'

Vol. i., August, 1740.—'I called on one who, being at Long-lane on Monday, the 4th instant, was exceeding angry at those that "pretended to be in fits," particularly at one who dropped down just by her. She was just going to "kick her out of the way," when she *dropped down herself*, and continued in violent agonies for an hour. Being afraid, when she came to herself, that her mother would judge of her as she herself had done of others, she resolved to hide it from her. But the moment she came into the house she dropped down in as violent an agony as before. I left her weary and heavy-laden, under a deep sense of the just judgment of God.'

In later years, perhaps, the most wonderful spiritual phenomena took place under the preaching of Berridge, the saintly Vicar of Everton, who, it will be remembered, when reprov'd by his bishop for preaching 'at all hours and all days,' replied: 'My lord, I preach only at two seasons.' 'Which are they, Mr. Berridge?' 'In season and out of season, my lord.'

Eccentric though this extraordinary man was, he was none the less remarkable for his learning, his common-sense, and his cool judgment; and yet his services became world-renowned for the *miraculously sensational events* which attended the preaching of the Word, and which drew multitudes of all classes to hear.

It was in the midst of the apparent confusion of weeping, sobbing, roaring, and ejaculating sinners

under conviction, and disenthralled spirits rejoicing in their freedom—that the Word grew mightily and prevailed. Strong men were seized with convulsive fits, which distorted their features and cast them to the ground, often these being the greatest opposers and scoffers. Mr. Wesley himself graphically describes one of these scenes as follows :

‘However, in awhile many of the scoffers were weary, and went away ; the rest continued as insensible as before. I had long been walking round the multitude, feeling a jealousy for my God, and praying Him to make the place of His feet glorious. My patience at last began to fail, and I prayed : “ O King of Glory, break some of them in pieces ; but let it be to the saving of their souls ! ” I had but just spoken, when I heard a dreadful noise on the farther side of the congregation, and, turning thither, saw one Thomas Skinner coming forward, the most horrible human figure I ever saw. His large wig and hair were coal-black, his face distorted beyond all description. He roared incessantly, throwing and clapping his hands together with his whole force. Several were terrified, and hasted out of his way. I was glad to hear him, after awhile, pray aloud. Not a few of the triflers grew serious, while his kindred and acquaintance were very unwilling to believe even their own eyes and ears. They would fain have got him away ; but he fell to the earth, crying, “ My burden, my burden ! I cannot bear it ! ” Some of his brother-scoffers were calling for horsewhips, till they saw him extended on his back at full length. They then said he was dead ; and, indeed, the only sign of life was the working of

his breast and the distortions of his face, while the veins of his neck were swelled as if ready to burst. He was just before the chief captain of Satan's forces. None was by nature more fitted for mockery; none could swear more heroically, and whip out of the close all who were affected by the preaching. His agonies lasted some hours; then his body and soul were eased.'

The genuineness of this revival was evinced by the awakening in one single year of upwards of two thousand souls. Yet how strange it is that Mr. Spurgeon, in his sketch of Berridge's* life, should confess his want of faith in the spiritual character of the phenomena referred to, and his sorrow to hear of their occurrence! Mr. Wesley's own wise comments will live much longer, and elicit the approval and sympathy of all lovers of the souls of men.

In the year 1759, when the storm had to some extent subsided, Mr. Wesley writes of Everton as follows:

'In the afternoon God was eminently present with us, though rather to comfort than convince. But I observed a remarkable difference, since I was here before, as to the manner of the work. None now were in trances, none cried out, none fell down or were convulsed; only some trembled exceedingly, a low murmur was heard, and many were refreshed with the multitude of peace.

'The danger *was*, to regard extraordinary circumstances too much, such as outcries, convulsions, visions, trances, as if these were essential to the inward work,

* 'Eccentric Preachers.'—C. H. Spurgeon. Passmore and Alabaster.

so that it could not go on without them. Perhaps the danger *is*, to regard them too little, to condemn them altogether, to imagine they had nothing of God in them, and were an hindrance to His work. Whereas the truth is: 1. God suddenly and strongly convinced many that they were lost sinners, the natural consequence whereof was sudden outcries and strong bodily convulsions. 2. To strengthen and encourage them that believed, and to make His work more apparent, He favoured several of them with divine dreams, others with trances and visions. 3. In some of these instances, after a time, nature mixed with grace. 4. Satan likewise mimicked this work of God in order to discredit the whole work; and yet it is not wise to give up this part, any more than to give up the whole. At first it was, doubtless, wholly from God. It is partly so at this day; and He will enable us to discern how far in every case the work is pure, and where it mixes or degenerates.

‘Let us even suppose that in some few cases there was a mixture of dissimulation—that persons pretended to see or feel what they did not, and imitated the cries or convulsive motions of those who were really overpowered by the Spirit of God. Yet even this should not make us either deny or undervalue the real work of the Spirit. The shadow is no disparagement of the substance, nor the counterfeit of the real diamond.’

Could Mr. Wesley have been a living witness of many similar scenes to those which were enacted at Everton that have distinguished some of the great revivals of the last seventy or eighty years, he would

have been strengthened in the views he enunciated then. I will abstain, however, from further comment on the genuineness or otherwise of these manifestations, except to observe :

1. That one purpose, if no other, was accomplished—viz., that tens of thousands were drawn to hear the proclamation of the Gospel, many walking distances of upwards of twenty miles, and were at Everton by seven o'clock in the morning, having set out from home soon after midnight.

2. That no more striking proof of the reality of the work could be adduced than that, while groups of men, women, and children gathered together in their own houses or in the fields, often women taking the lead, *merely to hear hymns read and to join in singing them*, great numbers were not only under conviction, but brought to decide for God.

3. That as several eminent ministers, who afterwards won thousands of souls themselves, were the fruit of this revival, no one can say that the results were transient, or merely physical.

But scoffers at Sensational Religion would take as much exception to another feature of this great Methodist revival as many do now to the same characteristic of the Salvation Army—viz., the all-nights of prayer.

Feeling that my own words on this subject will not have the weight of those of the sagacious adopter of this apostolic custom, I must again give here his own reference to this subject.

‘About this time I was informed that several persons in Kingswood frequently met together at the

school, and when they could spare the time, spent the greater part of the night in prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving.

'Some *advised me to put an end to this*, but upon weighing the thing thoroughly, and comparing it with the practice of the ancient Christians, I could see no cause to forbid it. Rather, I believed it might be made of more general use. So I sent them word I designed to watch with them on the Friday nearest the full moon, that we might have light thither and back again. I gave public notice of this the Sunday before, and withal that I intended to preach, desiring they, and they only, would meet me there who could do it without prejudice to their business or families. On Friday abundance of people came. I began preaching between eight and nine, and we continued till a little beyond the noon of night, singing, praying, and praising God.

'This we have continued to do once a month ever since in Bristol, London, and Newcastle, as well as Kingswood ; and exceeding great are the blessings we have found therein ; it has generally been an extremely solemn season when the Word of God sank deep into the heart even of those who till then knew Him not.

'If it be said "this was only owing to the *novelty of the thing (the circumstance which still draws such multitudes together at these seasons)*, or perhaps to the awful silence of the night," I am not careful to answer in this matter. Be it so, however, the impression then made on many souls has never been effaced. Now, allowing that *God* did make use either

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- of the *novelty* or any other indifferent circumstance in order to bring sinners to repentance, yet they *are* brought. And herein let us *rejoice together*.

'Nay, may I not put the case further yet? If I can probably conjecture that either by the novelty of this ancient custom, or by any other indifferent circumstance, it is in my power to "*save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins, am I clear before God if I do it not? If I do not snatch that brand out of the burning?*"'

Glorious John Wesley! a little child could teach him, and yet he was *no child* as to intellect, courage, or stability of character, but a strong and stalwart giant. In the child's voice he often heard the voice of his God, and when he heard he obeyed. The law of adaptation was to him as real a guide as that of love; nay, the very fulness of his love made him an enthusiast for the law of adaptation. How different all this to the spirit of His disciples who are continually crying up the 'old lines,' when the great God is continually drawing, nay, *dazzling* us to Himself with His novelties; not new doctrines, not new revelations, but new men and new women, new lives, new homes, new hopes, new songs, new shouts, new testimonies, Glory be to God!

(May I, parenthetically, venture to obtrude the remark that the element of *novelty* can in no other sphere of life be so much laid hold of as in the Christian Church?

1. Here we may have the full play of the human voice which scientists tell us is capable of producing no less than 17,592,186,044,415 different sounds.

Prodigious figures, indeed! yet when there is death in both pew and pulpit, choir and organist, God Himself, as we have elsewhere observed, is *weary with their words*. How often when there has been no spiritual joy, no real turning to God, no descent of the Holy Spirit, nothing but empty sounds, the great God sternly addresses Himself to the formal hypocrites, and bids them 'Take ye away from the noise of your songs; for I will not hear the melody of your viols'! But when there is real *spiritual* quickening there is no monotony, dulness, nor sameness. There is variety, eloquence, and sensationalism in every part of the worship and every gathering of the Church.

2. And where there is spiritual life, the Church of Christ could use every change of ministry, every anniversary, every sanctified marriage, every baptism, nay, almost every event of church life, to gather the stragglers of the flock together, and to cast the Gospel net for souls.

At present these events are, in the main, useful only as opportunities for social hobnobbing, humorous speech-making, showing off musical talent, or else in the case of marriage and baptism, a mere piece of formalism.

I have often, on anniversary occasions, sat myself in the midst of a huge congregation in which I have seen drunkards, gamblers, Sabbath-breakers, whore-mongers, many of them men whom I have visited, and repeatedly urged to come to the Saviour. Nothing but 'Yar anniversary'* would have attracted them

* 'Our Anniversary,' the Yorkshire (West Riding) mode of describing the annual Sabbath gathering of Sunday scholars for singing and preaching.

from the companionship of fools. This is the one event which makes them doff their fustian breeches, and don their suit of black. But when I have seen them depart as they came, to fill the public-houses, and often to pollute even the chapel-yard with their blasphemies, I have been ready to weep *tears of blood* for the system which has tickled their ears, and touched their sensuous nature, but never made the faintest effort to catch their souls either by guile or by love. Oh, if every Christian would take to heart those memorable words of Robert Hall on the value of souls, how ready they would be on every occasion to

‘Snatch poor sinners from the flames,
To turn them from a burning hell.’

‘For a single sinner, isolated from the human family, without influence either of good or evil—to be lost—is an event, to shadow forth the horror of which it would not suffice “for the sun to veil his face, and the moon her brightness, or to cover the ocean with mourning, or the heaven with sackcloth.” Nor, ‘were all Nature to become animated and vocal, would it be possible for her to utter a groan too deep, or a cry too piercing to furnish an adequate idea of the magnitude and extent of such a catastrophe.’)

But, to continue my sketch of the history of Sensational Religion, I would observe that the scenes that were enacted under the preaching of William Bramwell were such as that, to recall them to the memory of any true Methodist, stirs the heart and awakens enthusiasm wherever the record is perused.

Bramwell, although often opposed by his colleagues

in the ministry, who hated the confusion attending his services, gave himself up entirely to the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the methods he adopted for getting at the people. Like Mr. Wesley, he observed *no strict rule in the order of his services*. Sometimes he would cut his preaching short, in order to direct his attention to the slain of the Lord, who were falling all round him. At other times, having prayed himself at the close of preaching, he would call on two or three persons to unite with him in supplication. Often he would, whilst yet on his knees and in the midst of his prayer, break forth into singing, in which he was joined by the congregation. And whilst he believed that the living God rejoices over His returning children 'with *singing*,' he also delighted to remind the people that 'he will rest (*or be silent*) in His love,'* for on one occasion he invited his congregation to hold a Quakers' meeting. Then, having exhorted them to pray silently for the descent of the Holy Ghost, such were the floods of blessing that descended that several fell from their seats, some were in great distress of mind, and others felt the 'overwhelming power of grace divine.' Mr. Bramwell himself was quite overpowered, and cried out, 'O my Lord, I never thought of this!'

Upon this blessed man the unction of the Holiest was so poured out, that wherever he was present all conventionalities seemed to disappear. Not only at the ordinary services of the Church, but at love feasts, band meetings, watch-nights, the renewal of the covenant, and even the quarter-days, everything

* Zephaniah iii. 17.

- seemed to bend before the gusts of heavenly refreshing, which led at these means of grace to the conversion of multitudes of sinners and the sanctification of believers. Nothing would have more disconcerted the lovers of order than the following scene, which was witnessed and narrated by Mr. Henry Langden, of Sheffield :

‘ We can never forget his first appearance at that time in Garden Street Chapel. He had given the people no previous notice of his coming ; the sight of him, therefore, produced an almost electrical effect upon the society. The remembrance of many happy seasons with each other in public and in private passed in overwhelming review, and the people could not sing, nor could their beloved minister preach or pray without the most powerful efforts and frequent interruptions. Their joy was indeed ecstatic. When the object of his visit was known, the people vied with each other, and seemed as if they would pour in their whole store. Their bounty was so lavish that he had to restrain the feelings and limit the donations of many till, oppressed with the torrent of love and gratitude, he suddenly left the town, to prevent the poor from exceeding the proper bounds of their benevolence. Multitudes tendered their voluntary offerings without making any inquiry about the object to which they were to be applied. In this affectionate manner did they testify their love to a revered pastor, who had been a sharer in their joys, and had borne a part in their sorrows.’

Whilst we have thus recapitulated some of the more sensational results which accompanied mainly

the preaching of the Gospel under these glorious pioneers of Methodism, we must not forget that, although, as we have before observed, the preaching itself was for that day as sensational as the drums, trumpets, and banners of the present, yet the law of adaptation to the tastes, instincts, and even senses of the masses was never ignored, but continually adopted, by these men. Even the saintly leader of the great movement himself found that '*the fame of him*' had often failed to reach many of the obscure towns and villages whither his steps were guided, and thus he often had to stand alone in the market-place, the village green, or in the churchyard, and to sing a solo of thanksgiving until the poor clustered round him to join in the chorus. Thus records similar to the following are to be found all through the earlier parts of his journal :

'June, 1757. About noon I preached at Wooler, a pretty large town, eighteen miles from Kelso. I stood on one side of the main street, near the middle of the town—and *I might stand*, for no creature came near me till I had *sung part of a psalm*. Then a row of children stood before me, and in some time about an hundred men and women. I spoke full as plain as I did at Kelso, and Pharisees themselves are not out of God's reach.'

Nor was Fletcher, the saintly Vicar of Madeley, ashamed of adopting similar methods, for he would himself parade the streets of his parish with a *bell in his hand* before *five o'clock in the morning*, in order to call his parishioners to morning service.

Further on, at the early part of this century, one

of the greatest of evangelists was Hodgson Casson, whose eccentricities are remembered to this day. He would sometimes carry the chair on his head which he was about to use in the open air for his pulpit. Upon other occasions he would sally forth with his coat turned inside out. While in the Durham circuit a Church dignitary found fault with his irregular and exciting services. Just then one of his converts came up with two donkeys laden with coal. Casson appealed to him for a reply. The poor man then said to the parson: 'My donkeys could answer you. Before I got converted I used to give them shavings to eat, now I give them hay and corn.' Like Lassenius, the Dutch Court preacher, who, when his congregation fell asleep, awakened them by playing with a battledore and shuttlecock, so Casson might have said of the thousands who were drawn to hear him by his eccentricities: 'When I announce to you *serious* and *important truths*, you are not ashamed to go to sleep; but when I *play the fool* you are all eye and ear!'



CHAPTER VI.

THE SENSATIONALISM OF LATER REVIVALISM.

DURING the later days of Methodism fools for Christ have been rare, but our souls are refreshed by the memory of the Billy Dawsons and Sammy Hicks of our fathers' early days, and the Isaac Marsdens and Edward Brookes of our own acquaintance.

Who can forget the rough but powerful methods these men used for getting the people together, and for striking home the truth when they were within hearing? As one of Squire Brooke's spiritual children I shall always remember the sound of his 'Hallelujah!' and the stroke of his loving hand upon my head, as when a boy of ten I came to the footstool of Divine Mercy. Of his sermon I can remember but little, except that it was mainly the story of his conversion, interposed with an occasional 'sing' to waken up his congregation, or a personal appeal for verification of some of his facts to some old veteran, who would respond with a hearty 'Praise God!'

Squire Brooke could always draw great congregations of the very lowest class, as well as those who were 'higher up,' for he was 'sensational.' But his name is like ointment poured forth in thousands of

- English homes, for he was one of God's chosen vessels, willing to be used for honour or dishonour. And God used him.

And when Isaac Marsden preached in the market-places from his own cart, and went out into the slums to attract the people by all kinds of striking invitations to hear him at the various chapels, and after his marvellous appeals laid the pulpit Bible at the door of many of these places, warning the people that to step over it would be to incur the risk of damnation! He was also very sensational, but he was a mighty soul-winner.

And Methodism has given birth to numerous lay preachers of a similar type to these, who though they may not have obtained more than local celebrity, will shine as the stars in the firmament for ever and ever.

When, however, the early fire, self-denial, and aggressiveness of Wesley's days had begun to wane, God raised up Bourne, Clowes, and their noble band of 'Ranter preachers,' both male and female, to attract the poor by their camp-meetings and their other extravagances—too sensational for the divines of the Methodist Conference, but blessedly powerful in winning the depraved and lost for God and heaven. Men with frying-pan hats, flitch-of-bacon coats, wooden shoes, and mop-staves for walking-sticks, blowing horns, singing lively hymns to popular melodies, and marching through the domains of the lewd parson and his pot-companion of a squire, raised as much persecution, imprisonment, and virulent opposition as had ever fallen to the lot of the Methodists.

But the common people heard them gladly.

Prayer-meetings and class-meetings were often held in the open air. Farmyards, barns, open fields and outhouses often resounded with the cries of penitent sinners and the songs of their companions.

The nickname of 'Ranter' was applied for the very reason that these exponents of a religion for the poor were demonstrative and enthusiastic, boldly witnessing for Christ, 'in season and out of season,' like Berridge, and denying themselves even the necessities of life in order to rescue the perishing, although their very energy made them the target for all the hatred of the cruel mob, the officious policeman and the pompous magistrate.

With these men the ordinary methods of the pulpit to reach the human conscience were exchanged for eccentricities, equally as sensational as the methods they used to gather the people together. One good man (Rev. John Ride) would attack some very low and ignorant neighbourhood, and would stand, as David did before the inhabitants of Gath, as one demented, in the middle of the streets. Then, with strange gestures and loud bawling, the people rushed around him, and he would at once begin by asking them what was the current year of our Lord; then the month; then the day of the month; then the meaning of the Sabbath day. And on all this he would found an impressive address on Sabbath-breaking. And thus he won great numbers from indifference and sin to the service of the living God.

Another equally successful man (Rev. Thomas Batty), when he found the inhabitants of villages, where God and goodness seemed to be forgotten,

engaged in baking, selling, cleaning, etc., on the Lord's day, would find out the simplest and yet most popular tune with which the children of the place were acquainted, and then he would station himself on the village green and begin to sing. One of his ditties ran as follows :

'You must not mop on Sunday,
For that would be a sin ;
But you may mop on Monday,
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday,
Till Sunday comes again.'

These words were repeated until all could sing them well, then off he went again with

'You must not *bake* on Sunday,' etc.

Then

'You must not *buy* on Sunday,' etc.

Then, for the Sabbath-breaking shop-keepers, he would sing :

'You must not *sell* on Sunday,' etc.

Then, to the children :

'You must not *play* on Sunday,' etc.

Thus, God's law, which was forgotten because only proclaimed by an unconverted ministry, was written upon the hearts of the people through the doggerel verses of one whose life was in unison with God.

At those great camp-meetings, the glory of early Primitive Methodism, scenes similar to this were constantly recurring. The people were drawn together by sights and sounds which aroused their attention and curiosity, and then they were fed by the kind of food they could digest. Thousands upon thousands were converted to God at these gatherings, and

society for the time being was in a great measure transformed.

But this very brief sketch of the early doings of Primitive Methodism, with its mighty open-air revivals, carries our thoughts to the backwoods of the Transatlantic Continent, where at the beginning of the century one of the greatest camp-meetings the world had ever seen, was held at a place called 'Cane Ridge,' in the southern State of Kentucky.

Let it be a standing reproach to all demure, indolent, and anti-sensational Methodists that this wonderful gathering was marshalled by the Presbyterians.

At first intended by a small number of ministers of that denomination as a sacramental meeting, the very novelty of the gathering drew such a huge multitude together that the meeting was protracted for weeks. Ministers of nearly all denominations flocked together from far and near.

Day and night witnessed the mighty outpouring of the Spirit. Hundreds fell prostrate before God. At times as many as from twelve to twenty-five thousand were in attendance, and from the stands which were erected as many as seven ministers were addressing the people at one time.

It was said by truthful witnesses that such was the overpowering sense of the presence of the Highest that on certain occasions as many as 1,000 persons broke into loud shouting all at once, and their shouts could be heard for miles around.

This first camp-meeting ever held in the United States was the beginning of a new day for the spread

of evangelistic fire, and to this day they are continued and taken part in by all denominations. In writing these stirring records, I am reminded of the following conversation, which took place between myself and an intelligent railway-porter on the platform of a northern railway-station, where a number of clergymen were preparing to depart by train.

‘Where are all these parsons going to, John?’

‘Don’t know, except it be to a revival-meeting.’

‘What! Church parsons going to a revival-meeting?’

‘Aye, a revival of good *eating* and *drinking*.’

And John’s answer was the precise expression of the common sentiments of the working classes and the poor with regard to the habits of the clergy.

If instead of great dinners, feasts, convocations, and synods there were more common gatherings of rich and poor, learned and illiterate, parson and parishioner, minister and people, where all formality, reserve, ritual, and rubbish were cast aside, and there was ‘one shoulder’ against sin, one voice to cry out after God, and one common tarrying for the Holy Ghost, then the cavilling of every carper at sensational religion would be for ever smothered in a great shout of ‘Halleluiah!’ and the shepherd and the sheep would lie down together and be afraid of no ravenous beast. ‘Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will save My people from the east country and the west country; and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God in truth and righteousness.’

CHAPTER VII.

ORGANIZED SENSATIONALISM.

AND now, dear reader, I have endeavoured (albeit very imperfectly) to give you the results of some of my own reading, experience, and thought on the subject which heads these pages.

Perhaps now you may be disposed to admit, as I have been tardily compelled to do, that *organised* sensationalism of the type which I have described is, after all, no worse than that which is casual and erratic. And when the facts which I am about to give you follow, you may be inclined to lift a hand to stir up the latent forces of your own dead Church, and urge its leaders to the cry of 'En avant.'

It is undeniable that the present position of the Salvation Army is one of the most soul-stirring facts of modern Church history.

Barely twenty-five years old from its birth as the 'Christian Mission,' inaugurated by Rev. Wm. Booth, who had resigned his position as a New Connexion Methodist minister in order to carry the Gospel to the poor of the East End of London, it has now nearly '*sung itself round the world.*'

In 1876 only thirty towns had been missioned from

the headquarters in Whitechapel. In 1879 the glad tidings of salvation had been carried to the beggars, tramps, and working poor of no less than 130 towns. To-day there is scarcely a town or village in England which has not seen the uniform of the Salvationists, and scarcely one place of ten thousand inhabitants in which there is not a corps or an outpost. In addition to this, the Army flag is flying in thirty-five different countries, and at no less than 2,805 corps or societies the salvation of Jesus Christ is proclaimed by no less than 8,798 officers, whose meetings are held every day, amounting in all in the United Kingdom alone to 2,600,000 for the year.

The enormous multitude of persons reached by two million six hundred thousand meetings or services is almost incalculable. If the results had been only to keep these millions away from the public-house, the music-hall, and the theatre, the movement could not have been much less than Divine in its origin. But when even the most narrow-minded denominationalists have glorified God for the decrease in the drinking habits of the people, the upheaval of public opinion on the question of the social evil, and the passing of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, the quickening of the spiritual life of many of the Churches, the unshackling of the social fetters on womanhood, and, above all, the real change in the habits and lives of hundreds of thousands of fallen human beings, then may we not exclaim as John Wesley did when approaching the end of his wondrous pilgrimage, 'What hath God wrought'!

It is useless to deny that God has been with these

people and their noble leaders, for in the midst of their innumerable persecutions, slanders, and even death itself, they have sought to win the world from sin and misery, and in a great measure they have succeeded. God has vouchsafed a large outpouring of His Spirit upon them, and they have been *led* by the Spirit. Still, man's part in the work of saving the lost has been more than ever before brought to the fore. The problem, 'How to reach the masses,' has been solved, although the Churches still persist in their discussions and inquiries as to how the work is to be done.

Open-air music, whether it has been Miriam with her maidens and timbrels, or the white-robed priests of Israel and their trumpets, or the skilled musicians of Nebuchadnezzar, who summoned the people, nations, and languages to his idol-worship—open-air music always has been, and always will be, a wondrous spell to draw the multitudes from their lairs; and when the musicians can blow out salvation from their own saved and cleansed mouths, and the drummers drum it, and the Miriams timbrel it with arms and hands equally well saved, then the work of winning the soul is often half done before the Gospel is preached. When we state that during last year, 1889, no less than 620,000 Salvation Army processions have wended their way throughout the streets of the United Kingdom, one cannot wonder that hell has been aroused, and the fury of Prince Diabolus let loose upon the frail mortals who have dared thus to defy him.

To readers of the *War Cry* and other Salvation

Army literature, cases of conversion, as the direct issue of these street methods, are mere plagiarisms, although always causes of rejoicing. But possibly both they and others may be interested in the following instances, which I select from my own experience and the official records of the Salvation Army :

Some three years ago I was requested to visit a poor man who had ruined himself, and all but completely broken up his home by drink. I had known him in prosperity, when he was making five hundred a year as a manufacturer, and when he was a respectable and respected member of the Methodist society. When I entered his miserable dwelling I could scarcely believe that the wild and despairing being who crouched over the nearly empty fireplace was the same man. When the good soul who accompanied me (himself a converted drunkard) and I tenderly accosted him, he turned on us with frenzied visage and exclaimed, 'There is no hope for me ; I have sinned away the day of grace.' My friend told him of his own hideous life and gracious restoration, and for some time we urged him to return to His loving Saviour. But all our efforts seemed in vain, and after earnest prayer for his salvation we left, after giving him an invitation to our mission-room, where he blessedly found peace with God some few days afterwards. In narrating the account of his conversion at one of our meetings, he told us that before our visit to his home he had determined to commit suicide, and for this purpose had actually loaded a gun up to the very muzzle, placed it to his head, and his foot upon the trigger, when he heard

the Salvation Army band playing outside his house. As if the voice of God had been speaking, the sounds fell upon his ear, and, trembling with emotion, he thrust the instrument of death from him, and betook himself to his knees, when the preparatory work for his recovery to God commenced.

The case of Ben Wingfield, one of the Army drummers at Norwich, was not the less remarkable. It was the sound of the army drum, which he afterwards beat himself, that roused him whilst drunk to follow the procession to the Bull Ring, where an open-air meeting was being held, and whence, although he stood making drunken exclamations, the loving band who surrounded him marched him off to the barracks. There, in drink though he was, he was helped to the penitent-form, and was savingly converted to God.

When a drummer was wanted, Ben was the first to volunteer to carry it; and he not only carried it, but beat it until he was carried himself to the soldier's grave with military honours, his comrades marching in procession and singing two of his favourite songs—'It is well with my soul,' and 'Jesus is mine.'

'Give the glory to God,' I think I hear you say. Yes, dear brother, and so I do; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved than the name of Jesus of Nazareth. But when the prophet* has told us that the spoils of Christ's army shall be engraven with 'holiness unto the Lord, even the *bells of the horses*, and that every pot of Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness unto the

* Zechariah xiv. 20.

Lord of Hosts,' then how can we refuse to consecrate the big drum which proclaims our victorious approach?

Drum stories with Salvationists are heard at nearly all great gatherings, and we could multiply the number here almost indefinitely. We could record innumerable cases where despairing wretches have been drawn by this lure from suicide, in some from murder, in others (thousands of them) from drink, and in others from harlotry.

But the drum in foreign countries has not only attracted the poor, but the rich. During the International Congress of the Salvation Army held June, 1886, one of the greatest assemblages of Christians ever held since the world began, there were no testimonies to which I listened with such zest as those of several Hindoo gentlemen brought to God through the instrumentality of Commissioner Tucker, himself one of the greatest of all modern missionaries. Here is one, from the *War Cry* of June 12, 1886:

'Mirza Nauroz Ali, a Mohammedan gentleman from Umritsir, in the Punjaub, then gave an interesting account of his conversion:

"I was on a visit to Bombay, and had taken two or three rupees out of my bag to pay for my seat in a theatre, when *I heard the Army drum*, and was attracted to their meeting. I was very much touched at the time, and dropped the money I had brought with me into the timbrel when the collection was taken. However, I did not get saved, but went away to my own country. Several months afterwards, one night I heard that Major Tucker had come to my

town. I went and searched for him, but could not find him. The next day was Sunday, so I went to the church, thinking he might be there, but he was not. Till about two o'clock I was searching for him, and at last I found him at the Golden Temple of the Sikhs, one of the grandest temples in the whole of India. I found him surrounded with Hindoos, sitting in one of their rooms where they were accustomed to read their Scriptures. They had pushed their book aside, and Major Tucker was telling them about salvation. When I wanted to take him away to be my guest, they would not let him go. At last I persuaded them to let him go for two or three hours, on condition that he should leave his Bible and begging-vessel with them, and promise to return at five o'clock and hold a meeting in the garden of the Golden Temple. At the time appointed he came, and I was with him. No Christians would ever be allowed to hold meetings in such a place, but he had a large crowd. That night he slept in one of the places adjoining the temple, where pilgrims are lodged. I got saved that night, and so did two other Hindoos; and I believe there must have been others of whom I did not know. Now I am happy, and determined to fight for God with all my heart."

But whilst the drum has not only been the herald which has summoned multitudes of Ben Wingfields to leave their ale-bench, licentiousness, unbelief, and indifference, but a penitent-form laved with the tears of hundreds of returning prodigals, and a 'begging-vessel' to receive the grateful thank-offerings—would it be believed by lovers of the enquiry-room and the

elaborate church altar that another rich Hindoo, one of the leading native gentlemen in Gujarat, who gave up all for his new faith, being turned out of a responsible office under Government, and subjected to the most marked indignities—that this man found Christ, kneeling at a drum-head? Yet hear his testimony.

Captain Valji Bhai from Gujarat said : 'It is now two years since the Army came to my town of Borsad. The very first night they held a meeting one hundred and thirty natives sought salvation. Among them were my wife and three daughters. I didn't get saved that night, as a great battle was going on in my breast. The devil told me that I should suffer a great deal if I got saved. However, two nights afterwards the Spirit strove mightily with me. Three times I stepped forward to go to the *drum, which was the penitent-form*. Each time I went back again. At last I made up my mind and rushed out before them all and got saved. And now my wife and all my family are with me in the Army.'

'We will draw the line at the drum,' said an excellent evangelist to me, some time ago, when conversing about the best way of reaching the crowds. 'Yes, we will,' would be the Salvationists' rejoinder, 'when the drum's work is finished, and it no longer serves the purposes of a church bell, a penitent-form and a begging-vessel. But until that period arrives we shall not fail to praise the drum, but to recommend it to other sleepy Christians. Use it, thump it, rejoice over it, remembering that "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world to

confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not to bring to nought things that are.”’

But not only does God use the drum, but all the other sensational instruments for the accomplishment of His purposes. Many English people have been led by the successes of the Salvation Army to admit that the open-air music is good for attracting the people, but few can get over ‘that dreadful tambourine business,’ as I heard a good man call the noble Miriam’s contribution to the street orchestra. The day of judgment will, however, reveal what numbers of these modern heroines, who have been willing to be musicians for God, have contributed to the turning of many to righteousness. Here is a beautiful testimony from one of these poor women (of whom the captain said, ‘She is always at her post, and works for God and souls in the open air and inside, besides visiting the sick and keeping her large family beautifully clean and nice’):

‘The first twelve months after I was saved I could only run with the baby in my arms to the meetings sometimes. But when my husband got saved I was able to come out and work for God. I got a tambourine, and both of us have been regular open-air soldiers ever since.

‘The one reason why I take a joy in playing my tambourine is that (especially when there is no band) it makes a noise, and brings the people out of their houses and the public-houses. I have noticed them many a time listening to our talking.

‘I feel that if it will only bring the poor drunkards

- to the meeting and give us a chance to talk to them it will do some good.

'I knock my tambourine with all my might when I am in the open air, because I feel it brings sinners round us. I am as often as I can be at the open air, but I have a little family, and of course I have to look to them first, see they are right fast asleep in bed, and then I feel I can go.'

Another mother says:

'I have been playing my tambourine for three and a half years. I have six children, and have all to do myself in my house. But I do not neglect the meetings. I'd sooner get up, as I often do, *at four o'clock* in the morning, than have my work keep me from the meetings at night. We have two miles to walk every night before we get to the barracks, and are often very tired. But God gives me a bigger blessing when I am *almost tired to death*. Often when I put my work aside of a night and am almost fatigued out, I jump up and get my tambourine, and say, "Well, I'll go, never mind being tired, and get a blessing myself, and try and get some poor sinner blest, too."'

There is something remarkably touching in the remainder of this poor woman's experience:

'My little girl was the means of my husband's conversion. She went to the Little Soldiers' meeting and got saved; and though only eight years of age, after he had been cursing and swearing at me, she would get on her knees and pray for him. When he would want her to go for drink for him, she would pray and entreat him not to send her, and it was her simple prayers that broke him down. Before he was

saved he did not like my playing the tambourine, or coming to the meetings. But afterwards he set to work and made one for me, and became the side-drummer himself. Since then his father, my *two brothers, two of his brothers*, and two of their wives, have got saved, and have all got salvation homes like our own.'

Strange that after such bright and happy mementoes of the results of this new development of the yearning pity for their neighbours which true salvation has brought to the hearts of the poor, that one should hear the work being denounced, as one doctor of divinity did at one of the general assemblies of the Established and Free Churches of Scotland.

He said that 'it was encouraging a kind of religious life, but to his mind it was the lower religious life (applause). It was a religious life which the National Church and the venerable Assembly should be very careful, even by implication, in giving its approval to in any way whatever. On one occasion,' he said, 'he was present at a meeting of the Salvation Army (laughter), and there saw certain female captains and lieutenants (laughter) in all the glory of their braided coats and sashes. He thought that if these brazen-faced young women (laughter)—for they were brazen-faced young women of the lowest kind—were the kind of agencies to raise religious life to a higher level, he never understood what religious life was' (applause).

If the leading of a purer life and the cutting off an injurious habit could be considered contributory to higher spirituality, then the testimony of a bishop of

the Church of England, as given to a staff officer of the Salvation Army, shall be at least one answer to the slanders of this Scotch divine.

He said that he had been a smoker for years, but that since a corps had been established at a certain place, he had been to a good many of the meetings. Through the simple but plain teaching of the Hallelujah lass in command, he was led to see that God required him to give up the use of tobacco. He invited the captain and all the soldiers of the corps to come to his residence on a certain Sunday morning, and in their presence smashed up all his implements of smoking except a new meerschaum pipe, which he gave to the captain as a trophy of the victory won by God through her.

And here is another answer from a widely different source, a Roman Catholic paper in the city of Montreal, which, in commenting upon a desperate attack made upon the soldiers there, says: 'They have made the name of God ring in ears that have never regarded it before. They have carried the spirit of faith to the very threshold of those who would not put themselves out of the way to look for it. They have consoled the suffering, reformed the culprit, converted souls which, had it not been for them, would never have known that there was such a thing as a future for which one ought to prepare.'

Although the Scotch divine, who reviled so foully those whose dress and appearance did not suit him, was probably speaking truth when he said in his concluding sentence, what most earnest and self-

sacrificing Christians would be disposed to admit, that 'he never knew what religious life was,' yet his wrath could not have been greater than that of a large class of respectable people who can do with the bands, timbrels, open-air processions, and even the ejaculations, of the Salvation Army; but their other extravagances, such as being clothed all in red, riding to the barracks with their faces to the animal's tail, exhibiting their trophies, etc.—all these things very naturally disturb the equanimity of their critics' self-satisfied lives. No doubt these dear people are quite at one with the decision of the Zurich Council of State which classed Salvationist officers with mountebanks, and regarded their services as public shows, issuing a prohibitory edict, of which the Swiss correspondent of the *Times* of that period (about August, 1885) says, that 'No more arbitrary ukase was ever issued by a Russian autocrat.' Yet who dare again say anything against even these measures when one has heard how Commissioner Frank Smith—one of the most successful of all the Salvationist pioneers in America—gained, in his captaincy days, the attention of the Liverpool roughs when other efforts had failed? He mounted a charger, and *riding with his face* towards the animal's tail through the streets, entered the barracks *riding on to the platform*. By this singular procedure he never wanted for an audience, but won crowds of fallen men and women for God and heaven.

A bill was issued in connection with a country corps of the Salvation Army, intimating that upon a

certain day two Hallelujah lasses would lead great meetings. Some evil-disposed person erased the 'l' from the lasses, and the bill read 'asses.' This announcement so attracted the attention of a wild young fellow who was passing that he entered the barracks full of mischief. But he left a converted man, and is now a useful and successful officer in the Army.

'Midgets,' 'Converted Seals,' 'Happy Sallys,' 'Hallelujah cobblers, tailors, tinkers,' etc., are just as attractive now in drawing the multitude as the Billy Dawsons and Sammy Hicks of early Methodism.

But even in this matter of announcements and bills, the Salvation Army, in its sensationalism, adapts itself to the class of people it seeks to reach.

The chapel or church committee, in its united wisdom, devises for the walls of city, town, or village, its plain, sombre, obscure announcements, which the bill-poster often takes good care to stick in some out-of-way corner where nobody will read it. Result: nothing extra in the way of congregation, even to pay the cost of the bills. But the Salvationist means *business*, so he is willing to copy either ink, type, or matter of any sensational bill of any sensational man, firm, or association, and to use his own brains as well. Result: packed halls, emptied public-houses, saved lives. But if he wishes to catch the eye of the man of letters or culture, he tries Miss Charlesworth's (now Mrs. Ballington Booth's) method (equally sensational, because equally novel), who drew together one of the largest gatherings of students at Upsala, in Sweden,

which had ever been addressed by a woman since the university was in existence, by a bill printed in Latin. Many heard this sensational prophetess until their unbelieving hearts were broken, and their eyes filled with tears of penitence, who would probably never have come near had they not seen the Latin bill.

CHAPTER VIII.

SENSATIONALISM AND RITUALISM.

BUT I think I hear some of my readers now raising another objection to sensational methods for reaching the people—which I have often had to refute by personal dealing—viz., that these things are only the revival of mediæval tomfooleries, or, in other words, they are *ritualism*, full-blown and blatant. Let me, however, point out that there is the ritualism* of the priest, and the ritualism of love—two very distinct things. The ritualism of the priest seeks to draw the crowd by its crosses, candles, millinery, and incense, back to an old, half-pagan, half-Hebrew worship, which is *done* for them by the priest. The ritualism of love seeks only to woo the poor from their miserable haunts by its bands, banners, and processions, to hear the simple proclamation of a pure Gospel by those who are neither ordained by a bishop nor trained in a college, but only whose hearts are filled with burning compassion for perishing sinners, and who have been ready to forsake all to follow Christ. The ritualism of the

* Walker's Dictionary defines ritualism as 'the external observance of religion.'

priest means the advantage of a Church ; that of love the spread of Christ's kingdom. The ritualism of the priest means *money* ; that of love means *souls*. The ritualism of the priest is set forth as meretricious ; that of love exalts only the power and merit of redemption. The ritualism of the priest tends to idolatry ; that of love to salvation.

There is no worship without ritualism, but there is a good deal of ritualism without worship. Song is ritualism ; but when it is confined to the priest and the choir it is not worship. The bowing of the head at the name of Jesus may be worship ; but when it is not the abasement of the heart, it is pure ritual.

You may have a procession ten miles long ; but if it brings men and women no further than the confessional or the altar, and not to the feet of Jesus, then it is a mockery and a farce. But if those who form that procession resign reputation, comfort, and sometimes even life itself, in order to bring the weak and helpless to Him who has commanded us to go out into the highways and hedges, and to compel them to come in, then it is the great Master of the feast Himself that will be sought and found, and the feast will be love. Praise God !

I was greatly moved one summer evening, whilst looking out of my hotel-window in a pretty country town in Yorkshire, to hear the strains of a really good brass band which was parading the streets with a long procession, headed by the Vicar, accompanied by an eminent mission preacher, and the church choir, all surpliced, and carrying banners and flags, towards the parish church. I was glad to break the monotony of

commercial drudgery by following this remarkable cortège into the noble old edifice, which was already thronged with a motley crowd of rich and poor, Churchmen and Dissenters, saints and sinners. What the church-bell had not succeeded in accomplishing had been well done by the band and procession.

The service was deeply impressive. The sermon, on the gift and operations of the Holy Ghost, was earnest, evangelical, and practical. During its delivery there might have been heard all over the building, from the lips of various Methodists, Salvationists, and others, smothered exclamations of 'Glory!' 'Alleluia!' etc.

As I looked round the church, a friend who was near me told me of souls under conviction, whose heads were bowed, and whose eyes were filled with tears. 'Now,' thought I, 'there is a prospect of a break-down if the preacher would only cast the net.' But no; the preacher must not forget his priesthood. He must needs close this first service, and then, with solemn and downcast mien, walk from his pulpit to the altar, whence he began to commence another service which he called 'instruction.'

As he had already preached for upwards of an hour, to commence another oration was only to drive out the bulk of his congregation, which included the poor convicted drunkards and other sinners, who were amongst the first to go. When he had finished his dreary address the church was nearly empty, and all spiritual power had departed.

I made scrupulous inquiry with regard to this mission, but never heard of one single conversion that

had taken place, and a golden opportunity was lost for ever of opening the eyes of the blind and turning sinners from darkness to light.

When the Pope officiates at the Vatican, he is busied for *two hours together* in putting on and off his different accoutrements, according to the different parts he has to act in them. But who on earth or in heaven is benefited except himself, his satellites, and his modistes, artists, and their dependents? It is the ritualism of the priest, but not of love.

But, again, in the ritualism of love there is nothing stereotyped or formal. The law of adaptation here finds full scope for its talents, tact, and temporizing. The Booth family have persistently laid it down as an axiom of their system that the utmost latitude should be allowed to their officers with regard to their outdoor and indoor attractions for moving the hearts of the people. When the bands have been silenced, then the crowds have been subdued by a procession marching in dumb show.

Processioning is prohibited in France, and consequently a difficulty has often been found in getting the people into the halls. In some cases the officers have therefore engaged a man to beat a drum, and, having accompanied him, they have themselves in a loud voice announced the meetings.

Bishop Taylor, who may be said to have won more of the South African natives for God than any living man, was a thorough Salvationist. As soon as any of the Kaffirs were converted, they began to testify and to work for Christ. Amongst these was one who was deaf and dumb. After his conversion he began by

impressive pantomime to preach Christ in dumb-show, and many were saved.

Fiji, a land fifty years ago stained with the blood of the cannibals' victims, and plunged in the darkest night of heathenism, is now delivered from all that, and thoroughly civilized. Yet those who have contributed to this great reformation do not seek to quell in these poor people all their tastes, instincts, and enjoyments, but rather to adapt themselves to their flock and go in for the *ritualism of love*. Hence we find the following account of a Wesleyan missionary meeting, which, although some of my readers may have seen it before, is so good an illustration of my argument that I insert it here:

'At this meeting a collection was made for the support of the cause, the natives bringing their contributions in an endless variety of kind, the orthodox threepenny-piece being conspicuous by its absence. An element entirely new to us was the strange mingling of dancing, singing, and acting, which was, however, all founded upon incidents of the New Testament, the missionaries having taken into consideration the natural tastes of the people in their evangelical endeavours.'

The scene is thus described: 'The people, as they filed to the table, formed a wonderful spectacle. Most of the girls were without covering to their breasts, but the upper parts of their bodies were literally running with cocoanut-oil, and glistened in the sun. The men and boys were painted in all imaginable ways with three colours—red, black and blue. There were Wesleyans with face and body all

red; others with them soot-black; others with one half the face red and the other half black; some had the face red and the body black, and *vice versa*; some were spotted all over with red and black; others had black spectacles painted round their eyes; some had a black forehead and red chin; others were blue-spotted or striped with blue; and so on, in an infinite variety.*

'The external observance of religion' will exist whilst the world exists, and will always be used for reaching mankind *en bloc*. The lower the philanthropist descends in the scale of humanity, and the nearer he approaches to the infant nature, the more certain is he to reach the heart, wake the enthusiasm, quell the passions, and change the life by the ritualism of love.

Wilderspin, the founder of infant schools, having gathered together his first congregation of small children, found himself nearly deafened by a general cry for 'Mammy.' The little ones had for the first time in their lives been left alone. He tried in vain to quell their howls of grief, until, as if by inspiration, a happy thought struck him. He remembered his wife's cap, which was covered with blue ribbons, and, having taken possession of it, he mounted it on the end of a long pole, and marched into the school with this extraordinary apparition waving in the breeze. In an instant the children's miseries were ended, their tears dried, and there was the stillness of death in the room.

And thus was the secret discovered to this good

* The narrative of the cruise of H.M.S. *Challenger*.

man which revolutionized the education of toddling humanity. Even the babies could be reached through their senses. And ever since then the infant school has become a national institution, which has to multitudes of poor children been the most delightful break in their unhappy existence, and for many of them it has been a stepping-stone into the kingdom of heaven.

I stood during a recent summer day in the midst of a happy circle of children by the seaside. They were listening attentively to one of the good men connected with the Children's Mission, who was earnestly pointing them to the children's Friend. His address was full of vivacity, and the ritualism of love was continually called into his service by constant singing, clapping of hands, and responding to questions.

An old clergyman, whom I had noticed walking about with a pipe in his mouth, instead of being delighted to know that many of these children had professed to give their hearts to the Saviour, as a result of the services, was heard to grumble at the *sensationalism* (the very word he used) of the methods being adopted to win these lambs, and the *sentimentalism* which was being instilled into their hearts. Alas for lost humanity that the world is so full of what an American writer has lately dubbed 'Neophobists!'—that is, those who fear what is *new*.

As we have already intimated in the preface to this little book, we have addressed ourselves to spiritual people. But as our unworthy pages may perchance come within the notice of some hater of spiritual religion, who may deem himself a Christian, and

above all a Protestant, perhaps the following incident may be of some interest (as one out of many more that might have been given from the writer's personal experience) to show the true spirit which prevails amongst some of those who are so conservative of that which is outward and conventional, whilst utterly disloyal to that which is revealed by the Holy Ghost.

The story has already been given in the pages of *All the World* for December, 1888, in a paper by the author, addressed to commercial travellers; but it may be none the less fresh to many who may peruse these pages.

'I called not long ago upon one of the leading merchants in London, to bring to his notice the work of the Salvation Army. He turned on me with a savage shout, which I am sure could have been heard all over the place: "Salvation Army! Salvation Army! No, indeed! I'm a *Protestant!* What do I want with processions and banners, trumpets and drums? No, sir; I'm a Protestant."

"But, my dear sir, all the open-air methods of the Salvation Army are only to draw in the poor to hear the Gospel, and in this they are only following the example of the prophets, who did far more sensational things than they have ever done."

"Oh, *damn* the prophets!" was the reply of this ardent defender of a creed which he did not adorn, as he bowed me out of his private office, where for so long he had regaled himself with the solace, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease: eat, drink, and be merry."

'Strange that this very man and his ancestors

- should have built up their huge concern by the very commercial methods for drawing customers which this scion condemned as unsuitable for drawing sinners.'

One is reminded by the vagaries of all such pseudo-religionists as this man, of the stinging reproof of Queen Mary, consort of James II., when in the middle of his intrigue with Catharine Sedley he made her Countess of Dorchester. 'You are ready,' said the Queen, 'to put your kingdom to hazard for the sake of your soul; and yet you are throwing away your soul for the sake of this creature.'

So, like poor, weak James, whose only religion was bigotry, and whose only morality that of the confessional, there are many weak Protestants equally as blatant in their profession, but no more moral in their lives.

CHAPTER IX.

SENSATIONALISM AND MEROZITES.

BUT there is still another class of professing Christians to whom sensational methods are almost as distasteful as to the pseudo-religionists, viz.: those we may term the *Merozites*,* that is, those who do nothing, and who justify their indolence from exaggerated ideas of the sovereignty of God.

I had occasion to visit, some time ago, the splendid mansion of a rich Canon of the Established Church in the North of England. He had an excellent reputation, and I believe him now to be, in many respects, far in advance of the clerics of his immediate neighbourhood, in piety and enlightenment.

My errand was to obtain his co-operation in the protection of the weak and fallen poor from the ravages of the impure and licentious. I gave the Canon a number of horrible facts which had come under my notice during that week, to all of which he listened with half-closed eyes, as he reclined upon his couch.

Then he mildly interposed, by quietly observing:

‘Well, my dear sir, these facts are certainly very

* Judges v. 23.

sad, very sad indeed. But, you know, the great God is at the head of affairs, and He will put things right in His own due time. It is not for us to worry ourselves with all the woes of mankind. Sin has been in the world since Adam, and it will be there till the end. What we have to do is to exercise faith in God.'

'But,' said I, as I opened the Bible on his desk, and turned to Jeremiah xlviii. 10, 'what do you think of this passage, Canon?'

He took the Bible and read: "'Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully" (margin reads *negligently*,' said the Canon, 'and that is the more correct rendering of the Hebrew word), "and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood."

'Yes,' he continued, 'that is a very striking passage, very striking indeed, and I do not know that I have noticed it before. Let me see, this is where the prophet is appealing to the people to go against Moab?'

'Yes,' I added humbly; 'and the sin of Moab was that he had been *at ease* from his youth, and had settled on his lees.'

The Canon made no reply for some time, but seemed to be indulging in some quiet introspection.

Then, suddenly looking straight in my face, he said, almost angrily, but with a sigh, as if of contrition:

'Ah, that *was* the sin of Moab, and a good many others besides Moab.'

'True,' I replied; 'and yet do you not think there is a good deal of truth in what General Booth often says, that it takes both God and man to *make a potato* ?'

'Ye—e—s,' hesitatingly replied the Canon. 'There—may—be—some—truth—in—that.'

Then, after relapsing again for a few minutes into silence, he seemed to be getting impatient for the interview to close, but, rising from his couch, he said:

'I am very pleased to have seen you, and shall not forget our conversation. I shall also be happy to help the cause you represent in any way I can.'

A sweet walk from the Canon's beautiful residence into the neighbouring town gave me opportunities for still further reflection on the subject of our conversation. One important axiom often laid down by ministers of religion, but generally overlooked in practical teaching, seemed to impregnate all my thoughts, viz., that *nearly all error is the exaggeration of truth*. The monks of the earlier ages of Christianity were often right in their setting forth of the royal way of the holy Cross—a life of self-denial, and even self-mortification. Thomas à Kempis, later on, amongst other good things says: 'Behold! in the Cross all doth consist, and *all* lieth in our dying thereon.'

And this is true. But when the pains of the Cross were nearly all visited upon the poor inoffensive *body* through the medium of flagellation, hair-shirts, and long vigils, whilst the *soul* was dark and sinful, then Luther and his friends blew the trumpet of justification by faith, which in turn developed from the great leader's own mouth into the mistaken errors of Antinomianism, the mother of almost as much loose living as the false asceticism of Rome.

- Just so the setting forth of Scriptural holiness by
- George Fox and John Wesley—which has done more to revolutionize the world than all the dogmas of the Eastern or Western Churches since the days of the Apostles—has been by some exaggerated into a perfectionism which repels, or into the teaching of a *congestion* of spiritual attainment which is absurd.

- The same may be said of faith-healing,* which is as Scriptural as conversion, but has so often been
- grossly caricatured by hypnotism, or sorcery, through the avarice or ambition of wicked men, until Christians have almost ceased to believe in the teaching of the Word of God on the subject. Perhaps there is no form of error, however, so seductive and paralyzing as that hyper-Antinomianism which, whilst it admits that the great God of the universe is an Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient and All-loving Being, affirms that He is to be served only by faith, and tacitly asserts also that whilst the world may be perishing, He is either inattentive to the cry of the lost, or independent of the help of all His creatures, or that He invariably 'picks' those who are to work, and rejects those who are not.

* Probably the following remarkable extract from Mr. Wesley's journal may be interesting to those who believe in faith-healing—as I do myself ; for, thank God ! I have been *thus healed* : 'Wednesday, August 15, 1750. By reflecting on an odd book which I had read in this journey, "The General Delusion of Christians with regard to Prophecy," I was fully convinced of what I had long suspected : 1. That the Montanists, in the second and third centuries, were real, Scriptural Christians ; and 2. That the grand reason why the miraculous gifts were so soon withdrawn, was not only that *faith* and *holiness* were well-nigh lost, but that *dry, formal*, orthodox men began even then to ridicule whatever gifts they had not themselves : and to decry them all as either madness or imposture.'

The fact is, these distorted views of the sovereignty of God eliminate, or at least minimize, the free agency of man until he becomes a mere machine, never to hang up his hat, or eat his dinner, or take his walks abroad, and certainly never to go out to seek and save that which was lost, unless God tells him to do so.

A cry of horror issues from all lips, and a blush of shame mantles every cheek when one reads occasionally, in the newspapers, of a sweet little child being drowned, whilst a crowd of cowardly bystanders look on in indifference or dismay, without ever extending a helping hand or flinging a rope—but souls die and go to hell all round us, even in our very homes—and, forsooth, we solace ourselves with the view that God has neither called them to salvation, nor told *us* to warn them to flee from the wrath to come.

This is what John Wesley called a *doctrine of devils*. And yet how near we all are to this error when we dwell too much upon God's part in the salvation of the world and overlook man's!

It was the lament of Isaiah, in the day of Israel's disloyalty to God, that 'there is none that calleth upon Thy name, that *stirreth* himself up to take hold of Thee;' and Peter thought it right, as long as he was in the tabernacle of his flesh, to *stir up* the saints; and Paul exhorted Timothy to *stir up* the gift that was in him.

Oh, this stirring up! How few there are that are either willing to stir up themselves or anybody else! Isaiah says in another place (xiv. 9) that even hell *stirreth* up the dead to meet Nebuchadnezzar at his coming amongst them.

And if that is true of the headquarters of the devil when a great capture is made, how much more stirred up will these regions of the damned be when their emissary, the great hyper-Antinomian devil, returns to report his successes in lulling to sleep whole communities of rich, learned, and influential Christians in all the Churches of every land! 'Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently.'

Dear reader, but a few weeks ago it was said in my hearing that we are living in the age of judgment, and that the day of grace is past; and that God intended but to save a few, and that few were those who believed in the teaching of the propagandist of a modern heresy. I went home, and opened my Bible to the triumphant concluding stanzas of the same cultured prophet (Isaiah) from whom I have quoted before. Almost the last reads thus: '*And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, saith the Lord*' (Isaiah lxvi. 23).

Then, turning over to the last words of other prophets, I found that Ezekiel concludes as follows: 'And the name of the city from that day shall be, *The Lord is there.*'

Daniel: 'But go thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and shalt stand in thy lot, at the end of the days.'

Hosea: 'Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them; but transgressors shall fall therein.'

Joel : 'And I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed ; for the Lord dwelleth in Zion.'

Amos : 'And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord.'

Obadiah : 'And saviours shall come up on Mount Zion to judge the Mount of Esau ; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's.'

Jonah : 'And should not I have pity on Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand ; and also much cattle ?'

Micah : 'Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.'

Habakkuk : 'And He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and will make me to walk upon mine *high places*.'

Zephaniah : 'At that time will I bring you in, and at that time will I gather you ; for I will make you a name and a praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I bring your captivity before your eyes, saith the Lord.'

Haggai : 'In that day, saith the Lord of Hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet : for I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of Hosts.'

Zechariah : 'In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord ; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah

shall be holiness unto the Lord of Hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them, and see the therein; and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of Hosts.'

Malachi: 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord; and He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.'

Fellow-Christian, it may be that you, like myself, have been led to notice that all these wonderful, sensational messengers of God saw before them, in the dim vista of the future, a glorious salvation for a lost and guilty world, such as it had never before entered into the heart of man to conceive. But my only apology for calling your special attention (it may be somewhat tediously) to these blessed promises, is that the reading of them so refreshed and energized my own faith in God, and revealed to me the possibilities which were still in store for those who *stirred themselves up* to take hold of God—that I feel ready to hide my face for very shame that my own part has been so small in *hastening the coming of the Lord*.

I cannot conclude this chapter more fitly than by giving you a little incident which has just come to hand in a letter from a dear relative. She was telling her little nephew, a bright boy of six, how much sin they had in London, when he quickly replied, 'Well, auntie, they have salvation too.'

CHAPTER X.

SENSATIONALISM AND THE PEW.

BUT not only are there the Merozites of *heterodoxy* crowding our churches, but a great host, orthodox enough, whose sin is their disloyalty to any religion which is anything beyond *Pewism*. Alas! If Matt. xxv. 41-46* is not to be frittered away by commentators and disquisitionists, what a full place hell will be! Yet the pew is by no means a Divine institution. God never intended that men should 'sit' and 'sing' themselves away to everlasting bliss.

Under the old dispensation, whilst preachers and prophets were by no means limited to the ranks of the priesthood—for God not only raised up kings and princes, great generals and soldiers, but obscure herdsmen, poor peasants and weak women to proclaim His

* 'Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye gave Me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; naked, and ye clothed Me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not. Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.'—Matt. xxv. 41-46.

messages of salvation to the people—so times and places were equally irregular. Camps and courts, streets, schools, cities and villages, were all selected as suitable for the Divine proclamation.

When Ezra preached to 50,000 of his countrymen, true, it was from a pulpit, but he was not the only preacher; for on his right hand, in a wing of a temporary gallery, there were six of the principal preachers, and on his left there were some others. On scaffolds erected for the purpose there were thirteen other principal teachers and many Levites, who *alternately officiated*. Then there was no idle lolling or drowsy nodding, for during the greater part of the service the people were either bowing their heads and worshipping the Lord with their faces to the ground, or else they were standing whilst the law was read and expounded.

And when the multitudes followed Christ away from the hum of the city to the slopes of Olivet, it is true He encouraged their recumbent posture, for oh! what infinite tenderness there was in the record, that when He saw the multitudes He had great compassion, for they were as sheep having no shepherd. But these sheep had followed Him because of their soul-hunger. They wanted spiritual bread, and the dear Lord fed both body and soul. Had they been mere formalists, loungers, idlers, they would never have left the sacred enclosure of the temple or the synagogue. But they had had enough of long prayers, phylacteries, and *cold* expositions of the law.* It was

* Ezra's expositions were backed up by the fire and loyalty of his own heart.

bread they wanted—spiritual, Divine, satisfying—and Jesus gave it to them. It is not at all likely, however, that the little provision for their bodily requirements, which the disciples and the boy had brought, would have been offered beyond the privileged circle who had exercised this forethought. If the Lord had not spread for the multitude His lavish repast, they would most likely have satisfied themselves, and then carried away what was left, without thinking of their famishing neighbours.

But the Shepherd meant not only to feed the sheep, but to see that they also should distribute to their neighbours. So, beginning with the disciples, who had a little in hand, the word of command to give was handed round, and as they gave, the store wondrously grew, until all were satisfied, and there was enough and to spare.

Oh! what a lesson to the proud, worldly, luxurious, selfish multitudes, who gather to-day in all the sanctuaries of Christendom, who say the prayers, sing the hymns, and hear the sermons, and go away just as they came, never thinking about their dying, sorrowing neighbours, and never lifting a little finger to tend or save them!

‘Oh! but I subscribe to many charitable institutions; I help to support a home missionary; I give liberally to the church funds.’

Yes, exactly, that is precisely why there is so little real good done. Everybody is trying to do the work of salvation by proxy.

As a lay representative to the Methodist Conference observed to a dear ministerial friend of mine, when

the latter was urging him to strive to win souls,
 'Oh! that is the *minister's business*, not mine.'

'What are you doing for God, my brother?' I asked
 a customer of mine some time ago.

'Well, I go round with the box.'

'And is that all?'

'I am afraid it is.'

'Why, the blind beggar's dog does that. Surely you
 are of more importance to the world than a blind
 beggar's dog?'

And yet, are there not millions upon millions of
 professing Christians to-day who do not even do as
 much for God as the blind beggar's dog?*

Four hundred and sixty peers of the realm make
 or mar the laws of this great empire, but how many
 Lord Shaftesburys are there amongst them to help
 the poor to keep their laws?

'Their only labour is to kill the time,
 And labour dire it is; and weary woe;
 They sit, they loll, turn o'er some idle rhyme,
 Then, rising sudden, to the glass they go,
 Or saunter forth with tottering steps and slow;
 This soon too rude an exercise they find;
 Straight on the couch their limbs again they throw;
 Where hours and hours they sighing lie reclined,
 And court the vapoury god, soft breathing on the wind.'

* On asking a similar question the other day of a member of
 one of the large Dissenting Churches of South London, he
 replied, 'Why, I am not doing anything. I am only a *private*
member.'

The thought struck me (although I had no opportunity of
 replying then), Why should such a condition of affairs be
 possible?

If the ministers of all the Churches of Christendom were to
 adopt Dr. Waugh's plan, all this would soon be changed. It is
 said of him that he never admitted a member without *inquiring*
what he could do for the Church, for society, and for the world.

From their curtained and bedizened family pews they respond, 'We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord,' to that oft-repeated prayer, 'That it may please Thee to succour, help, and comfort all that are in danger, necessity, and tribulation.' But how much do they do by personal, loving, self-denying contact with these sorrowing ones, to bind up the broken-hearted, and to lift up the hands that hang down?—And when we descend a little lower in the social scale, how many do we find of those members of the lower aristocracy, members of Parliament, or large employers of labour, who take a personal and vigorous interest in the welfare of those around them? A huge political demonstration, a missionary meeting, or even some great religious gathering may elicit their support, and possibly their chairmanship. But how many of them would think it their duty to tackle a poor lost sinner on his way to hell, even though he may be of their own household? How many judges have we that would throw off their ermine to visit one of the miserable wretches they have condemned to die? Where are the 'great unpaid' that would leave off lecturing the poor deluded prisoner they have just sentenced in the dock, to go and pray with him in the cell?

And whilst Matt. xxv. 41-46 is all but ignored, not only by the rich, but by the rank and file of professing Christians, and the poor, in the main, are handed over to the tender mercies of the relieving officer, the casual ward, and the set-apart missionary, curate, sister of mercy, or other officer, there are not wanting those, even in the Dissenting Churches, who

- have desired to widen, even in Church worship, still further the present gulf which separates the poor from the rich, and to hand over the lapsed ones bodily to mission-rooms, halls, and Salvation Army barracks.

- As the wife of a Methodist brewer, whose firm owns more than a hundred public-houses, said to a friend of mine some time ago, when the husband of the latter had been helping a godly minister to fill a suburban chapel by missioning the streets for the poor : 'They do not want that class of people in chapels. Let them go to the Army, or the mission !'

Yet the necessity of mission-rooms was never contemplated by the Great Founder of Methodism.

Every *chapel* was to be a *mission-room*, not a place for Pharisaic lollers to stretch themselves, or professional orators to disport themselves.

Wesley never intended that any set of men and women should monopolize the sittings, but that every chapel should be free, the rich meeting with the poor, and all alike receiving the bounties of one common meal.

He himself describes the arrangements at the foundation of Methodism : 'From the beginning the men and women sat apart, and none were *suffered* to call *any place their own*, but the *first comers sat down first*. They had no pews, and all the benches for rich and poor were of the same construction.'

This democratic, but thoroughly social, arrangement continued in force in every chapel in London until four years before Mr. Wesley's death, when,

much against his will, the authorities of City Road set aside his policy.

'The committee proposed to me . . . that every one who took a pew should have it as his own ; thus *overthrowing at one blow the discipline which I have been establishing for fifty years*' (Journal, Dec. 18, 1717). It was the more remarkable that Mr. Wesley should have been so pronounced in his views on this subject, as he was, by birth, association, and education, a *cleric*, and it was only the deep spiritual foresight, which was certainly a century before his times, which made him seek to keep down all the class selfishness that he could see would crop up as his Church became more conservative and respectable.

The fact is, pews and pew-rents are only another form of endowment, equally as pernicious and injurious to the aggressiveness of a Church as anything which exists in the Establishment. And the fact that the voluntary offerings of the poor, given night by night, and week by week, in the Salvation Army, are providing seats for upwards of ten millions of human beings throughout the world, is an unanswerable argument to satisfy the scruples of those who wish to know how Churches are to be supported without pew-rents.

CHAPTER XI.

SENSATIONALISM AND THE PREACHER.

THEN, whilst we must admit that preaching (and mark, it was in the main speaking as the *Spirit gave utterance*, the proclamation of the *herald*, and not the rhapsody of the professor of theology) was largely used by God in early Methodism for quickening the dormancy of the masses, and winning souls for Christ, yet Wesley had seen enough of the blighting influences of a State-fixed ritual never to desire any such methods of conducting worship in his own chapels. He was emphatically a man of the people, and he knew that if the people were to be saved they must not have a religion which was *done for them by the priest*. Hence we cannot find in all the archives of Methodism any *absolute* or *unalterable rules for the conduct of Divine worship*. All that was to be left in a great measure to the exigencies of the hour, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.*

As we have reminded you elsewhere, Wesley himself observed no special rule in his preaching. Some-

* The *One-manism* of the present system of worship is neither prescribed in Methodism by trust-deeds, nor is it acceptable to the people, but generally the outcome of 'old fogeydom,' selfishness, or clericalism.

times it was long, sometimes short. Nor when the converted sinners were falling around him, did he hesitate to stop, and pray, or sing, or keep silence, just as he was led to do by the Holy Ghost.

Often he was himself so overpowered by the mighty influence, that he remained, with upturned face and closed eyes, unable to utter a word. And this was more or less general with all his preachers. It was impossible for them to adhere to any rules, for the cries of the wounded and the shouts of the delivered ones were a continual interruption, whilst the overshadowing presence of the Highest humbled their spiritual pride and blew their preconceived notions to the four winds.

Alas! how all this is changed now! It is the *mantle* of the *priest* now, not the overshadowing of the Highest, which chills and enervates the majority of our chapels, whilst the parched and hungry souls depart home unrefreshed and unfed.

I shall never forget sitting in a choir of a Methodist chapel, next to the choirmaster, who was himself a man of culture, being a F.G.S., a magistrate, and a member of the School Board, and although a rich man, he was a hater of all that smacked of Rome, or the rut, or red-tape. With much impatience he listened to a twenty-fiveminutes' prayer, which rambled round the world, and asked for no definite, present, and saving blessings for the congregation. Then, having announced the chant, the preacher augustly sate himself, only rising to announce the lesson, which he droned through in monotonous tones. Then having indulged us with a hymn of three verses, he

again sat down, as much as to say to the congregation :
 ' Your part of the worship is nothing to me but a bore.
 The preaching is the only Scriptural, important,
 appointed part.'

After 'gripping and worriting' his congregation with
 moral platitudes for an hour and a quarter, he finished,
 leaving them much the same as when he began, like
 Tennyson's Northern farmer :

'An' I hallus coom'd to 's choorch afoor my Sally wur deääd,
 An' 'eerd 'im a-bummin' awaäy loike a buzzard-clock ower my
 eäd ;
 An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd, but I thowt a 'ad summut to
 saäy,
 An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said, an' I coom'd awaäy.'

How kind of him, after all this 'bummin' away,' to
 graciously permit his sorely tried hearers to satiate
 themselves with just *one verse* of a well-known hymn !

When, however, the magistrate heard this, he
 grunted out (as he banged the hymn-book on the
 floor), audibly enough for all around to hear him :
 ' Ah ! he is like all these selfish fellows. He wants all
 the service to himself—preaches an hour and ten
 minutes, and then leaves us to sing just one verse.'
 Yes, indeed, the selfishness and shortsightedness of
 the ordinary chapel service, whilst it drives away the
 poor, does not win the rich. The man of broad and
 catholic mind and generous heart hates monopoly,
 whilst he loves his case.

Conviction is rarely sown, even in the cultured
 mind, by mere thoughts or illustrations. The power
 of the Holy Ghost has often been made more mani-
 fest to the rich and learned when the people have
 been using their prerogatives of praise, or of prayer,

or of witnessing, or when the minister has been too full of emotion to utter more than a few broken sentences. The rich man needs, indeed, as a rule, less feeding than the poor; and a few more 'Woe unto you's!' hurled at their heads to wake them from their slumbers would be far more the will of God than the spiritual sweetmeats they get now, and often far more appreciated. 'I don't know how it is,' said an old lady to a minister some time ago, 'that you always preach sermons to comfort your congregation in a morning. I looked round the church this morning and I saw no one that I thought needed any comfort except that they had not got money enough.'

I have myself attended Methodist places of worship now, off and on, for upwards of thirty-five years, and the number of comforting words I have heard during that period would certainly, if made into a necklace of comfits, have reached round the world.

No Christian, who is fully trusting God, through Jesus Christ, and is delivered from doubt, and fear, and sin—which experience is the prerogative of every blood-bought sinner upon the face of the earth, if he will only claim it (see Heb. x. 35—New Version also)—needs to be nauseated with *doles* of comfort. Christ is all in all to him. 'I shall be *satisfied* when I awake in Thy likeness'; 'My Beloved is mine, and I am His.' These are the happy expressions of such as are fully saved, and those who are not fully saved should be urged at every service to get fully saved, and not be always requiring spiritual patches, pills, morphia, and delicacies, to relieve them from their present miseries, which are sure to recur at the very

next service, as Widow Pascoe's did at Daniel Quorm's class-meeting.

Oh! if every minister of the Gospel were converted, entirely sanctified, and filled with the Holy Ghost, there would be no need for Acts of Parliament to sanction little alterations of Church ritual, or special consultation with superintendent ministers, to permit Methodist congregational innovations, or church meetings to enable Dissenting pastors to adapt themselves more fully to their congregations. All this would come about spontaneously. If God was in the church services, that which was too emotional, or erratic, for the law, would find vent for itself in the after-meeting of the schoolroom or the vestry, and both chapel and church would be oftener a 'Bochim' for repentant sinners, rather than a fashionable lounge for Scribes and Pharisees. Nay, indeed, events would often transpire such as happened in 1886 at Portessie in Scotland, during one of the most extraordinary revivals that has ever taken place on that coast since the days of James Turner of blessed memory. This work broke out, as so many revivals of religion have done, in the house of a poor man, who opened it for prayer-meetings a whole week. During this week a fisher lassie said to her mother: 'Mother, something will happen here before long'; and the instinct of this dear girl (who is now a captain in the Salvation Army) was indeed spiritual, for the wave of power which had been invoked at the cottage prayer-meeting began to sweep over the place, until no less than two hundred and twenty, out of a village containing only twelve hundred inhabitants, professed to

find the Saviour. Work was suspended for a fortnight, and the fishermen dare not go to sea. The women, who were mending their nets, left them and went to converse with those who had found Christ, and asked them to pray with them.

In the hall where the people gathered together the lieutenant says: 'The place seemed filled with smoke. I felt ready to fall over myself when I saw big men jumping over the seats to get to the penitent-form. Eight in one family got saved, all grown up. The penitent-form was blocked up with sinners seeking salvation, and all over the hall men and women were crying and shouting for mercy. Some fell off their seats, others fell down in the aisle on their way to the penitent-form. Women and children were knocked over in the scramble to reach the mercy-seat. Fifteen big fishermen came all at once, shouting and knocking one another about. When they got saved they would jump up and begin to shout to the people exhortations to repentance, and to seek Christ there and then. Their violent earnestness shook the whole hall. "I was afraid," says one of the oldest soldiers, "that the platform would come down." One man, after getting saved, jumped out of the window and ran home to tell his wife and family about it, and any one else he met.

'After spending some time in telling his family and neighbours of his having found Christ, he came back, re-entered the hall the same way, and began to work among the seekers at the penitent-form. Considerable commotion was caused through the village by a woman rushing through the principal street "scream-

ing for mercy." She ran hastily up to the hill to the hall, and the whole place being blocked with people, she could not get further than the door, but there she knelt, and there prayed God to have mercy upon her. She soon found it, and then began dancing for joy.'

On the Sunday morning the barracks was packed out at eleven o'clock, and the surplus congregation went and filled the Methodist Chapel. Here the good minister, who no doubt thought all this excitement needed allaying by a few injunctions as to decency, order, etc., duly ascended the pulpit, and proceeded to open the service in the usual way. A fisherman, however, before he announced his text, rose and shouted, 'No paper sermons to day!' A song was at once started and taken up heartily by the whole congregation; testimonies followed, and sinners were invited to come to the front and seek salvation. Five sought and found Christ, whilst the minister, who did not interfere, sat quietly looking on.

Now when one hears this graphic story, only a sample of many other revivals which have broken out amongst the poor, one cannot but wonder that the pulpit should not have been endowed with the same spiritual instinct as the pew, and have descended from its dignity, decorum, and dulness, into the arena of conflict with sin and sorrow which was raging all round. Probably, if this good man had rolled up his sleeves and plunged into the thick of the conflict he would have been able to lead fifty instead of five to the feet of Him who wept with them that wept, and rejoiced with them that rejoiced.

If only some *daring, out-of-office, God-possessed* man of the people would start up and edit a religious newspaper to be yclept *The Layman*, how many moans similar to the following would be heard from the back seats of Merozite churches, whose pulpits have never known other than Merozite parsons!

A MOAN IN CHURCH.*

WRITTEN DURING SERMON.

'Dull-featured, leaden-eyed, the preacher stands
And holds the sacred volume in his hands.
No touch of genius lightens up his face,
No kindly accent speeds the word of grace :
He drawls and maunders in unending drone.
Oh for some lightning flash, some thunder tone,
Something to show *life* yet remains on earth—
Sorrow or joy, wild laughter, madness, mirth ;
Something for heart and mind to feel and know,
Not these and phrases following row on row.
Our souls refuse the weary watch to keep,
And feel God giveth His beloved sleep.
Grant, Lord, some help from heaven, some spirit touch,
Now that we feel so little, hear so much.
And, as a set-off to our sins' amount,
Put this day's suffering to our account.'

No doubt the above lines have found an echo in thousands of hearts.

It is time the words also of the prophet were dinned in the ears of the great majority of modern preachers. Not only have they preached away the poor, but they '*have wearied the Lord* with their words.'

One of the greatest of living evangelists said to me some months ago, during the course of a deeply interesting conversation, 'The ritualism of Rome has been exchanged for a religion of *jaw*.' And is it not

* J. A. Binns, Bradford, *Spectator*, Feb. 28, 1885.

so? Think, dear reader, if you have been a regular attender at church or chapel, how many hundreds of essays, thousands of repetitions, millions of words you have heard read and delivered in church or chapel during your lifetime, and how much do you retain? Dean Swift says that the chameleon, who feeds upon nothing but air, has of all animals the nimblest tongue; and in another place he says: 'The preaching of divines helps to preserve well-inclined men in the course of virtue, but seldom or never reclaims the vicious.'

No doubt his thoughts were of the chameleon when he wrote of the divines: 'Never was there such an age of nimble tongues as this of ours, and yet how little comparatively is accomplished in winning the world for God!'

'Well, my friend, the week's labours are over,' was my introductory remark to a railway porter who sat opposite to me in a third-class railway carriage on the N.E. Railway one Saturday evening.

'Yes, sir; and I am glad of it,' replied the porter with a sigh.

'Well, I suppose you will attend some place of worship to-morrow?'

'Yes, sir. I attend R—— H—— Methodist Chapel, L——, when I can get away from work.'

'Then you've heard many a sermon?'

'Ay, many a hundred.'

'Yes; I'll tell you what I did the other Sunday afternoon. I read a sermon that I calculated it would take about a quarter of an hour to deliver. I counted the number of words in it. I multiplied the result by

two—two sermons every Sunday ; then I multiplied that by four—four Sundays in the month ; then that by twelve—twelve months in the year ; then that by ten—ten years, and I reckoned that if I went to chapel or church for ten years, and heard two sermons every Sunday, at the end of ten years I should just have heard *one million five hundred and ninety-six thousand words*. Now, my friend, you've heard these hundreds of sermons and millions of words, how is it with your soul ? Are you saved ?

Poor fellow ! I had touched the chord that vibrated, for, with his lips quivering with emotion, and his eyes filling with tears, he slowly stammered out, 'N—no, s—s—ir, b—b—ut I sh—sh—ould like to be.' Grasping his hand, and looking straight into his eyes, I said with all the tenderness I could command :

'Do you really mean that ?'

'Indeed I do, sir. I want to lead a better life and to be saved.'

'Then, my dear friend, do not you know what the *Salvation Clock* says ?'

'Yes, sir, I think I do ; it says "*Now !*"'

'Ah ! that's it. Well, if you really believe that "now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation," kneel down here, and we will pray for you.' And down he went on to the carriage floor, and began to weep, and sob, and cry 'Lord, save me !' A ministerial friend of mine, who sat opposite, joined us on our knees, and laid hold of God in earnest pleading for this precious soul, whilst I was directing him to the Saviour of the world. He required little teaching, that had all been done before. All he

needed was the will to *turn* from his *sins*, and open the door to let the dear Master come in, and that did not take him long to do, for after I had myself prayed, he rose from his feet, and with new tears, which were those of gratitude, he joined us in singing :

‘ I’ve got the dear Master within,
He’s pardoned all my sin ;
I’ll keep Him no more outside of the door,
I’ve got the dear Master within.’

He left us, promising to join the Church when he reached home, and to begin to work for God.

When one looks back over a series of years, in which button-hole experiences similar to that of this lad have been almost constantly recurring, and that there are really *but few* human souls in which there is not some chord that would vibrate if touched with the loving hand of Christ-men and women, quickened by the mighty power of the Highest, then we wonder that there should be so much negligence in that which is of all things the most important, viz., the continual casting of the net for souls.

Oh that all the great army of Merozites, from pew, choir, pulpit, convocation, conference, synod, and other nimble-tongued assemblage might be led to cry out from pole to pole, and from the rising to the setting of the sun, with one international wail, ‘ Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost. We are cut off for our parts ’ !

Then might we not expect to hear from the throne of the living God that thrilling announcement : ‘ Behold, O My people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

‘ And ye shall know that I am the Lord when I have *opened your graves*, O My people, and brought you up out of your graves,

‘ And shall put My Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land ; then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord.’

THE END.